Dudley
CHRONICLE
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JOBS BOOST AS ESTATE EXPANDS

Report by Jamie Brassington

SENIOR councillors have welcomed the prospect of hundreds of new jobs at a Brierley Hill industrial estate

The jobs are to be created after Dudley Council approved the estate's expansion, which business leaders estimate will add millions of pounds to the local economy.

A Local Development Order (LDO) has been agreed for Blackbrook Valley Area in Brierley Hill, which will make it easier for new businesses to move in.

Councillor Ian Kettle, cabinet member planning and economic development, said this will create 250 jobs in 106 hectares of land. Welcoming the plans, he said: "I want to get local wages up."

Dudley Council deputy leader David Vickers said: "I welcome these plans that will create new jobs in Dudley. This is something that is much needed."

Councillor Ian Kettle

High quality manufacturing and office jobs will be created on the estate. The LDO will make it easier for businesses to set up shop.

Blackbrook falls in a 'regeneration corridor' earmarked between Dudley and Brierley Hill, which ties to the planned Midland Metro line when the network links up with Dudley and Brierley Hill.

Backing

It forms part of the DY5 Enterprise Zone which was set up in Brierley Hill in January after backing from the Government. The zone will create 7,000 jobs and could generate £589 million annually for the area's economy.

It is situated in around 700,000sq m of land at Blackbrook Valley, between Netherton and Russells Hall .

A council report said: "The purpose of this Local Development Order is to help deliver area based economic growth and regeneration, in close proximity to the DY5 Enterprise Zone, with a focus on enabling industrial employment development through a simplified planning regime."

The report said the benefits of the LDO will 'avoid unnecessary delays for a developer'.

BIRTHDAY BOY BENJI IS KING OF THE SWINGERS

Bornean orangutan Benji is to celebrate his 40th birthday at Dudley Zoo this weekend and visitors are asked to sign his card

HE'S one of Dudley Zoo's most-loved residents and now orangutan Benji is about to celebrate his 40th birthday.

And, like anyone reaching that milestone, he is to be treated to a right royal knees-up.

The primate has become one of the zoo's most iconic animals after being admired by visitors for the past 21 years.

Upper primate section leader Pat Stevens said: "Benji is one of our real characters at Dudley Zoo and he deserves a very special celebration for his milestone birthday. He's been here for 21 years and we all love him and his quirks, of which he has quite a few. He loves having his ear tickled, but then he'll try and push your finger up his nose for a scratch, plus he's fascinated by our visitors' sparkly jewellery and tattoos and loves watching people pass by.

"He's also never without his beloved bread crate and will carry it with him wherever he goes, as well as turning it upright to sit on it so he can see us through the den door. He's very inquisitive."

The birthday festivities will take place this weekend, ahead of Benji's birthday on Monday, with the zoo holding af undraiser in aid of its £800,000 orangutan enclosure appeal.

Visitors, who can support the appeal by purchasing charity pin badges and wristbands, can leave their special wishes for the great ape in his birthday card throughout the weekend celebrations.

CARAVANS

Coseley on shortlist for travellers' camp

AN emergency holding camp for evicted travellers could be built in Coseley.

Dudley Council bosses are thrashing out plans for a transit site in the borough and Coseley is believed to be on the shortlist.

Councillor Paul Brothwood, UKIP group leader in Dudley said: "It is my understanding a site is being looked at in Coseley. Unfortunately we can't send them to another borough. We have to have one in the borough."

Coseley East Ward councillor Star Anderton said chiefs should prepare for battle over any plans put forward for Coseley.

PARKING

Fees in line to be lifted for Christmas

PARKING charges look set to be suspended on council car parks on certain days in the run-up to Christmas.

Dudley Council is proposing free parking on December 16 and 23 in a bid to boost trade for town centre businesses. Parking will also be free to coincide with Christmas light switch-ons across the borough.

Parking charges have been regularly suspended in years gone by.

DEATH

Bridge tragedy victim is named

A man who died after he is believed to have fallen from a bridge over Wolverhampton's ring road has been named locally as Chris Brookes, aged 22, from Coseley.

He was found with serious head injuries in a bus lane under the footbridge linking bus and train stations in Wolverhampton during the early hours of Sunday. He was rushed to hospital but died of his injuries.

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Hundreds turn out for Megan's funeral

The funeral order of service

A FUNERAL service has been held for Megan Bills – the 'vibrant' and 'wonderful' 17-year-old whose body was found in a clingfilm-wrapped wardrobe.

More than 200 people turned out at St James Church in Wollaston on Monday to say a final farewell to the hairdresser from Stourbridge.

The ceremony came five months after she was discovered dead at a hostel in Highgate Road, Brierley Hill.

Westlife song 'I'll See You Again' played out as mourners entered the church where Megan's wicker coffin was placed at the front draped in flowers.

Reverend Nick Kaleniuk began by telling how Megan was born in Coventry and was brought up by adoptive parents Dawn and Martin Bills in Stourbridge with her brother James.

She went to St James Primary School in the town. She became a dedicated member of the church choir while going on to pursue a career as a hairdresser.

Rev Diana Farmer read out a tribute from her family, saying: "She played flute beautifully, cooked the best cakes, had an amazing talent in her profession as a hairdresser, was kind and caring to people of all ages and loved animals."

"Dawn, Martin and James said what a privilege and honour it was to have been a part of her life, there were lots of adventures along the way," Rev Farmer added.

The service also heard a tribute from Megan's former foster carer Jenny, who said: "She was loved by everyone who knew her."

Ashley Foster, aged 24, of no fixed address, was arrested and charged in connection with Megan's death. He has admitted one count of preventing a burial but denied a charge of murder. He is due to stand trial in January.

Parking fine hotspots of borough revealed

NEARLY 4,000 parking fines were handed out in three months in Dudley borough this summer.

More than £82,000 was made from penalty notices between July and September as drivers were caught flouting the rules.

Castle Street in Dudley was revealed as the most likely place for motorists to be slapped with a ticket – with more handed out there than anywhere else during the period. From the start of July until the end of September, a total of 3,796 fines were issued, bringing in a total of £82,225.

The figures were released by Dudley Council under the Freedom of Information Act.

Bosses warned that those who continued to break the rules would be made to pay for it – with traffic wardens out in force in Castle Street.

The pedestrian section, which joins Market Place, has double-yellow lines but there are some bays allowing shoppers to park for an hour.

Hotspot

The street remains the borough's parking fine hotspot after it was revealed earlier this year that almost 1,500 were issued there in 2016/17 – an average of five a day.

Councillor Paul Brothwood said: "With the introduction of free parking across the borough I am hoping there is less chance of people getting tickets.

"We want people in our town centres, there is plenty of free parking available. As long as people are parking legally, they shouldn't be concerned."

He added: "Compared to other councils our revenue from parking fines is relatively small."

Stourbridge High Street, Dudley High Street and Wolverhampton Street in Dudley, were next on the list on hotspots where motorists were most likely to pick up a fine.

Drivers who flout restrictions are hit with fines of up to £70. However, the amount is cut by half if paid within 14 days.

Bostin' Black Country images

Gary Crutchley captured this atmospheric evening shot of the museum's vintage fairground attractions

IT is one of the region's best loved and most photographed attractions. So, to mark its 40th anniversary, the Black Country Living Museum launched a photographic competition to show the site at its best.

Visitors were urged to snap their own shots at the Tipton Road museum and submit them for the 2018 calendar. Now the winners have been chosen. They are Stacy Woolhouse, Derek Barrett, Tony Carwithen, Robert Herringshaw, Derek Barrett, Neil Brinsdon, Stephen Davis, Gary Portman, Stephen Davis, Gary Crutchley, Paul Lucas, and Roger Bowater.

Among the winning photos is this atmospheric shot of the museum's ever-popular fairground. The various shops and workshops, tram and canal bridge also feature among the stunning array of images taken by museum visitors. The calendar can be ordered on the bclm.co.uk website.

Dancer has raised £5k in memory of father

A DANCER has spoken of her pride after raising more than £5,000 for a cancer charity, after her father died from the disease.

Chloe Evans' latest fundraising event raised £1,100 for Bowel Cancer UK, where a night of dance and theatre was held on her father's birthday.

She lost father Wayne to bowel cancer in May 2013. He was just 42 and left behind his wife Clare and two daughters, Chloe and Natasha.

Chloe, aged 20 from Sedgley, said: "I am so proud, but so thankful to everyone who has supported me in all my fundraising. It is an incredible amount to raise and I wouldn't have achieved it without everyone's kind generosity."

She began fundraising one years ago and her total for Bowel Cancer UK has now reached £5,277.

Proud

Her father would have turned 47 last Saturday, when the event was held. Chloe said: "I like to hold my fundraising events on special dates. It turns everything into a positive and I know he would be super proud."

More than 70 dancers, including Chloe, performed in the event at Colton Hills School in Wolverhampton, while more than 100 people watched.

Among the dance groups was a group from a HND Dance Course at Kidderminster College, where Chloe is studying.

Library hosts a spooky reading

THE Halloween chills aren't over quite yet... a spooky special event will be held at Dudley Library on Wednesday to celebrate the publication in paperback of a new series of ghost stories by Susan Hill, who wrote The Woman in Black.

The event on November 8 will see the library team working with The Reading Agency to celebrate the release of Ms Hill's new collection 'The Travelling Bag'.

There will be an atmospheric live storytelling session with readings from the latest work, which include an assortment of hauntings.

The evening starts at 6.30pm and tickets are £2 and that includes refreshments. Pay on the door or book through the library service.

Fireworks display

A pub is hosting a charity bonfire night in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice tonight (Thursday). The New Inn, on the corner of Cherry Street and Glebe Lane, in Norton, Stourbridge, will host the event with fireworks shows at 7pm and 9pm.

Campaign to bring old rail route back

GOVERNMENT Transport Secretary Chris Grayling is facing calls to reopen a long-disused stretch of railway that passes through the heart of the Black Country.

Campaigners have urged Secretary of State for Transport Mr Grayling to bring back into use a section of the Worcester to Derby Main Line between Stourbridge and Burton in Staffordshire.

The stretch, which passes through Brierley Hill and Dudley, closed in the 1960s as part of the infamous 'Beeching' cuts that shut down 4,500 miles of tracks in the UK.

The move has been backed by West Midlands Mayor Andy Street, who described it as 'a long-term aspiration'.

The Campaign for Better Transport has urged Mr Grayling to set up of a fund to pay for the opening of 12 additional railway lines and stations across the country.

Stephen Joseph, the group's chief executive, said: "We regularly hear from local authorities, developers and communities with very good proposals who have reached a brick wall when it comes to funding.

Damage

"That's why we're asking the Transport Secretary to create a new Network Development Fund and help reverse some of the damage done to our railways by Dr Beeching's hatchet job more than 60 years ago."

The line between Stourbridge and Burton runs for 56km. Freight trains run along 26km, but it is completely closed to passenger trains.

Mayor Mr Street said: "Complete reopening of that line is a long term aspiration and one we endorse entirely. In the shorter term we have said we will focus on restoring passenger services using the Metro to Brierley Hill and the reopening of the Stourbridge to Brierley Hill route. Reopening lines gives us a fantastic opportunity to reduce congestion and drive economic growth."

Viscount's talk helps hospice

MORE than £3,000 has been raised by Lord Cobham of Hagley Hall for Mary Stevens Hospice.

It came from a dinner at The Granary Hotel and Restaurant entitled An Evening with Lord Cobham, where he spoke about the history of Hagley Hall and his plans for its future.

Jackson tribute

A Michael Jackson tribute act will be touring next year.

Got to be Michael Jackson will perform at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on March 10. Tickets are £12.50 in advance or £15 on the door.

Spending on schools dips in borough

THE amount of cash spent on school funding across the Black Country has risen in real terms over the past year, new figures reveal, however Dudley has failed to follow suit.

More than half of England's local authorities have suffered budget cuts in 2017-18, according to research by the House of Commons library, commissioned by the Lib Dems.

But the Black Country has bucked the trend, with a slight overall rise in real terms spending per pupil of 0.33 per cent.

Wolverhampton saw a real terms increase of 0.67 per cent, schools in Walsall saw a rise of 0.42 per cent, and in Sandwell it was 0.33 per cent. However, there was a slight drop in Dudley of 0.11 per cent per pupil. Despite this dip, the new figures have been praised by Black Country leaders.

Walsall North Tory MP Eddie Hughes said: "I'm delighted the Lib Dems have highlighted that the Conservative Government are spending more on education. We are delivering on our manifesto promises and it's refreshing to see the Lib Dems promoting the fact the Conservatives are fighting for a better education for kids in the borough."

But the Lib Dems say the cash boost falls short of addressing the disparities in funding across the country. The average spending per pupil in the West Midlands was £4,499, but in Hackney the amount was £6,460. Ian Jenkins, a spokesman for the Lib Dems in the Black Country, said: "This money is welcome but if you speak to any teacher they will tell you that is not enough.

"How can one child in the Black Country be worth two thousand less than a child in Hackney?

"The Government cannot throw a few pounds about and wave a magic wand, we need real and sustained help."

In July, Education Secretary Justine Greening announced £1.3 billion in extra funding for schools over the next two years.

The Department for Education (DfE) figures on planned local authority spending on schools for 2017-18 were used in the analysis, with the Treasury's 2017-18 inflation rate of 1.63 per cent applied to calculate the changes in real terms.

Motorist found guilty of hit-and-run murder

A MOTORIST who mowed down a man in cold blood and left him to die has been found guilty of murder.

Nidal Alboraiki drove his Vauxhall Corsa at a group of four friends in the late night incident after an unexplained exchange.

After first missing the group, Alboraiki turned his car around and accelerated again, striking 36-year-old Benjamin Morse from behind and catapulting him onto his windscreen. The victim, an Arsenal fan, suffered a catastrophic brain injury and later died.

Victim Mr Morse

Alboraiki drove off and abandoned the Corsa. But police tracked down the 21-year-old and he was arrested at his family's home in Foxhunt Road, Halesowen.

On Monday a jury at Wolverhampton Crown Court found him guilty of murder and seeking to pervert the course of justice. He was due to be sentenced.

Alboraiki's 19-year-old brother, Ahmed, was found guilty of seeking to pervert the course of justice. He disposed of a mobile phone handed to him by his brother. He was sentenced to 12 months in prison and a further two months for an unrelated matter of possession of cannabis.

Judge James Burbidge QC, said: "It is extremely likely that the phone would have assisted the police in the fact that Nidal Alboraiki was driving the car, which he was not prepared to admit at an early stage.

Mr Morse, of Yewtree Road, Halesowen, was murdered in Beach Street, Halesowen, on May 1. He and his friends had just been dropped off by a taxi in Bloomfield Street North when they encountered Alboraiki.

The jury took five hours and 49 minutes to reach unanimous verdicts.

Ruth Morse, Ben's sister, said: "Ben had a wide circle of friends and the whole community has suffered from his loss."

Dolly good time with the 9 to 5

Louise Hicklin, of Halesowen, Salli Gage, of Kingswinford, and Michelle Cassells, of Stourbridge, in 9 to 5

PERFORMERS are set to bring a Dolly Parton hit to life on the stage.

Members of Cradley Heath Amateur Operatic Society – known as CHAOS – are putting the finishing touches to their production of 9 to 5 The Musical, which runs from November 14 to 18 at Stourbridge Town Hall.

Michelle Cassells, one of the actors, said: "It's all starting to come together now. It's very funny, fast-moving. It's really good fun."

The show, featuring music and lyrics by the country/pop music sensation, is based on the 1980 movie of the same name, about three office workers who turn the tables on their sexist boss.

And Dolly herself will be putting in a cameo appearance via a projection of the Grammy Award winner, who will introduce the characters and lead the audience in a sing-along of the blockbuster title tune.

Tickets, which start from £14, can be purchased by calling the box office on 0121 585 7380.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Winter vomiting bug closes ward

A ward at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley was closed for more than a week following a norovirus outbreak, it has emerged.

Patients were struck down with the winter vomiting bug, resulting in one of the wards closing on October 19.

Dudley Group NHS Trust chief executive Diane Wake said there were two new norovirus cases last Thursday with five other patients showing signs.

Families have been advised to keep visits to a minimum in a bid to stop the bug from spreading. Ms Wake said: "The virus was identified quickly and contained."

Metal bin stolen from hospital

A metal waste container was stolen from Russells Hall Hospital, prompting a police investigation.

The container held mixed paper waste for recycling and did not have medical records inside, bosses at the Dudley hospital said. It was taken on a truck at around 6.45pm on Thursday, October 5.

Diane Wake, chief executive of the Dudley Group NHS Trust, said it would have contained mixed paper waste for shredding and recycling, such as leaflets, posters and magazines.

Tool suppliers in move to estate

A major tool supplier has agreed a deal to move to an industrial estate.

Toolstation has signed a 10-year lease on a unit at Ionic Park in Dudley.

The park, off the Birmingham New Road, consists of eight units, with Toolstation the latest big name to join the likes of Screwfix.

Nick Jones, director at Ashfield Land, which owns the site, said: "Ionic Park has been a real success story and this deal with Toolstation shows its continued attractiveness to occupiers."

Only Fools star Boycie to talk about career

TWO TV legends will share their experiences of nearly 100 years in show business.

John Challis aka Boycie from Only Fools and Horses and Nick Owen from Breakfast TV will appear live on stage talking candidly about their lives and extensive experience in television.

The show will take place on November 14 at Brierley Hill Civic Hall. Tickets are priced at £17.50, doors open 7.15pm.

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COUNTY NEWS

£104m is spent on fixing the problem

COUNCILS across the UK spent more than £104 million repairing potholes last year, new figures show.

And local authorities splashed out more than £3m compensating drivers who had their vehicles damaged as a result of hitting one. It comes as a survey from confused.com revealed that more than one third of drivers had their cars damaged by potholes last year, with tyres (64 per cent) and suspension (42 per cent) the most common repairs. The repair bill total works out at £245 per pothole.

It also revealed that if you added up the depth of all the potholes in the UK it would be 25 miles deep.

Ex-forces should join police, call

POLICE forces should hire more ex-armed forces personnel when they retire from the military, a campaigner has said.

Wolverhampton Liberal Democrat activist Paul Butters has called on West Midlands Police to recruit more former soldiers, sailors and airmen.

Figures show that the force has 379 officers who were in the services – around five per cent of the 7,000 total.

Mr Butters said: "Ex-military personnel would make fantastic police officers, and it shocks me that for all the talk of harnessing the talent of forces personnel on civvy street we are not doing it."

Over-50s prone to own a drone

THE craze for flying gadgets is really taking off among 'silver soarers'. It is often assumed that younger people tend to be the first to adopt new technologies, but the majority of drone users in the UK are aged over 55.

Research for DronesDirect.co.uk found 31 per cent of drone owners are in that age group compared to just 10 per cent aged 18 to 24. Those aged 45 to 54 are the next most likely to own a drone at 28 per cent while just 12 per cent of 25-34 year olds own one.

Only the hologram, but Roy to return

LATE music legend Roy Orbison will appear as a hologram for a tour next year. The Texan singer/songwriter, who died in 1988, is best known for songs such as Only The Lonely and In Dreams. The hologram of Orbison will be backed by the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra.

The In Dreams hologram tour will arrive at the Genting Arena in Birmingham on Monday, April 9.

Lorry driver pleads guilty in crash case

A motorist was so badly injured in a smash involving his car and two lorries on the M6 in March that he has only just been discharged from hospital, a judge heard.

Martin Brannigan was trapped in his vehicle on the M6 southbound between junctions 3 and 2, and had to be cut free before being taken to hospital.

Following a police investigation, one of the lorry drivers was charged with being responsible for the pile-up, which led to the southbound carriageway being closed for almost five hours.

At Warwick Crown Court, Andrew Hallbrook, aged 45, of Donnington Court, Dudley, pleaded guilty to causing serious injury to Mr Brannigan by driving his Daf HGV on the M6 dangerously.

Asking for the case to be adjourned, prosecutor Mr Adam Wester explained: "The prosecution wish to serve a comprehensive medical report, together with a prognosis."

Mr Earl Pinnock, defending, also asked for there to be an adjournment for a pre-sentence report to be prepared on Hallbrook.

Adjourning the case, Recorder Stuart Sprawson granted Hallbrook bail. But also imposed an interim disqualification. He warned Hallbrook: "You have pleaded guilty to an offence which is extremely serious, which could result in a prison sentence."

Mr Brannigan is believed to have suffered life-changing spinal cord damage in the crash.

Described on a crowd-funding page as a 'former Irish dancing dad,' a benefit evening was held recently at the Royal Hotel in Sutton Coldfield to raise money to help him and his family.

Man is charged after public halt armed raider

By Andrew Turton

A MAN has appeared in court charged after an armed robbery at a Dudley convenience shop.

Have-a-go heroes helped foil the raid at Spar, in Abbey Road, Lower Gornal after two men wielding a machete and baseball bat burst into the shop.

Stephen Ball, aged 31, of Turner Street, Tipton, was charged in connection with the raid.

He is accused of robbery, criminal damage, assault, affray and possession of an offensive weapon.

He appeared before Dudley Magistrates' Court on Wednesday October 25.

He was remanded in custody to appear before Wolverhampton Crown Court on November 22.

During the incident, which took place at 10pm on Monday last week, one man jumped over the counter to take cigarettes and cash as the second, carrying the machete, threatened workers and demanded they open a safe. He then fled the shop leaving the man with the bat behind the counter.

Passers-by, spotting the drama, held the shop door shut to leave the suspect unable to escape through the store.

Weapons

When he eventually smashed his way outside, the raider tried to break into a woman's car while she was inside. But he failed to snatch the keys and was grabbed again by residents until police arrived.

The second robber had managed to flee in a silver Rover car but left behind the cash he seized. Police praised the have-a-go heroes while they launched a manhunt to find the second robber.

Detective Constable Cal Sanders, from West Midlands Police's CID, said: "The suspect was detained as he was smashing the windows of a vehicle parked outside the shop in order get the keys and make good his escape.

"This vehicle had a lone woman inside who was showered in the glass and she is obviously shaken up by the incident.

"Passers-by intervened and detained the suspect at the scene. Without the public's help, I doubt he would have been caught."

The second suspect was wearing dark clothing and gloves, in his late teens to early-20s, possibly white, and of slim build. He was around 5ft 5ins tall.

The Spar shop in Abbey Road, Lower Gornal, where have-a-go-heroes held down an armed raider

Travel giant defies threat of terrorism

BUS and coach operator National Express fended off the effects of terrorism to carry more passengers, driving higher revenue and profits across the group.

Low Fare Zones, which have been piloted in Sandwell and Dudley, have led to a four per cent increase in passenger numbers and a two per cent increase in revenues.

Shares jumped by three per cent on opening after the transport giant, which runs bus services in the Midlands as well as the Midlands Metro tram system, reported a 6.4 per cent rise in revenue in the quarter covering July to September.

Profits have accelerated since the half-year mark, helped by ticket promotions and low fare zones. Pre-tax profits rose 14.9 per cent, an improvement on the 11 per cent in the first half of the year.

The group's coach division has overcome the impact of terrorism to secure growth.

Call for more discretion over holidays in term time

PARENTS who take their children out of school for holidays during term time should not face fines every time, says the leader of Dudley Council.

Councillor Patrick Harley called on headteachers to use 'discretion' where possible.

It comes as it was revealed more than 200 parents in the borough were hit with fines due to their child's low attendance at school during a 12-month period.

A total of 224 fines were issued during the last school year because pupils were not attending school often enough.

Dudley Council took action against parents whose children were persistently staying away for school during 2016/17.

Parents are warned they could face prosecution in the event of 'persistent absence' which the Government says is 10 per cent.

Court

Fines of up to £2,500 can be issued if parents are taken to court.

Councillor Harley insisted it was unacceptable for children to be kept off school for no good reason. However, he also suggested parents who took children out of school during term time for holidays might not face fines on every occasion.

"It is the continued policy of Dudley borough schools that leave of absence for pupils during term time will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. This includes episodes of truancy or children simply not attending school.

"We are passionate about ensuring that all children attend school regularly to make sure they get an all-round, well-balanced education. However, we understand the financial pressures on parents taking children on holiday during half term and school holidays. Headteachers do have a limited amount of discretion that they should use sensibly and when appropriate."

Good service

THE firm running the Stourbridge Shuttle train is serving up a sponsorship deal for Quarry Bank Tennis Club.

Pre Metro Operations will sponsor the club over four years, which will enable major improvements to be carried out.

Club treasurer Paul Julian said: "We are delighted with this arrangement and are very grateful to Pre Metro. The deal underpins the financial stability of the club and allows us to plan for future improvements to the facilities and clubhouse."

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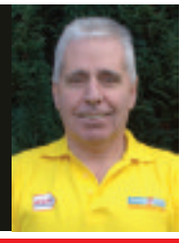

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'Pay up' call to clubs on £5 million police bill

WOLVES, Albion, Villa, and Walsall have paid police millions of pounds to man their matches, figures show.

A total of £5,196,527 has been paid to West Midlands Police by the region's six professional clubs since the 2013-14 season. But the force says the amount covers only part of the total matchday costs – and campaigners are calling for the clubs to pick up a larger slice of the bill.

Villa have the largest policing bill, totalling £1.5m over the past five seasons. Wolves' costs came to £1,015,995 but still less than the £1.1m paid by Birmingham City, and Albion paid £968,235. Walsall's bill was £265,701 while Coventry City picked up costs of £246,751 over the past five seasons.

Police can charge clubs for costs only inside the stadiums, meaning patrols around nearby streets, railway stations and town centres are paid for by the force.

Liberal Democrat campaigner Rob Quarmby said: "These clubs are some of the richest in Europe, sharing a part of a multi-million or even multi-billion TV rights deal.

"I believe if you can spend £20 million on a player who might sit on your [substitutes] bench, you can pay to keep fans safe, many of them paying hundreds of pounds to follow their team," Mr Quarmby added.

The figures were released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Teenage girl badly hurt in collision

A two-car crash in Dudley left three teenagers needing treatment – including one girl with serious injuries.

Three ambulances were called to Saltwells Road just after 11.45pm on Tuesday last week.

Fire crews from Haden Cross and Brierley Hill were in attendance after one of the cars was believed to have smashed into a parked vehicle and overturned. Paramedics worked on a teenage girl who was out of the car when they arrived. She had suffered a reduced level of consciousness.

She was treated for serious chest, pelvic, arm and abdominal injuries, immobilised and taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. Another teenage girl and a teenage boy were taken to Russells Hall Hospital.

TV's Berni in gig

A SINGER who found fame after winning 1970s talent show Opportunity Knocks is at Dudley Town Hall on November 11. Berni Flint will appear alongside The Merseybeats, Dakotas and Beryl Marsden.

Building firm helps to shape the future

Director Andy Bremner, Sir Eric Pickles and Highgrove's business development Manager Donna Bremner

A BUILDING firm has played a key role in a Parliamentary Review that will help shape Government policies.

Highgrove Developments, of Sedgley, appeared in the Parliamentary Review for 2016/2017 – a document that looks back on the year in industry and Westminster.

The review features the Dudley-based firm alongside the Prime Minister and a small number of outstanding organisations.

Director Andy Bremner and business development manager Donna Bremner attended the event in Parliament to help launch the publication. Ms Bremner said: "It was a really great accolade to be recognised. We're a local construction business in the Black Country, it was good to be part of something positive. It was really good for us to raise our profile outside the area. We found out around April that we were going to be in the Review.

"The event was in Parliament itself, it was in one of the reception rooms that overlooks the Thames.

"There was a number of high profile people along with other businesses that had been asked to come along and take part in the review."

The Parliamentary Review's director, Daniel Yossman, said the firm, along with others, had made this year's review possible. He said: "Sharing knowledge and insight with both peers and government is essential work and I am delighted that this year's Review will reach every corner of the British economy.

"It's always a real joy to hear from policy-makers. It is my belief that innovation is contagious, if only it is given the platform to spread."

Three vow to fight bid for boundary changes

THREE councillors have launched a campaign to block proposed boundary changes they say would 'rip the heart out' of a town.

Under Boundary Commission plans unveiled last month, part of Dudley town centre and neighbourhoods to its east would be placed in a new Sandwell constituency stretching almost 10 miles to Birmingham.

Councillors in St Thomas ward – which includes Kates Hill, Buffery Park, Oakham and Blowers Green – are urging businesses, charities, community groups and residents to oppose the plans.

Councillors Shaukat Ali, Steve Waltho and Shaneila Mughal made their views clear in a join statement.

They said: "We think these proposals are terrible for the community we serve and the businesses in the town centre we represent.

Ripped

"Why should our ward be chucked in with seven Sandwell wards in a constituency stretching miles and miles to the edge of Birmingham?

"We represent the heart of Dudley and it should not be ripped out like this.

"We're asking residents, businesses, charities and community groups to write to the Boundary Commission and urge them to think again."

The landmark St Thomas's Church would be in a different constituency to the ward that carries its name. The ward would be included with seven Sandwell wards.

It has been part of Dudley North since its formation in 1997.

The seat is currently held by Labour MP Ian Austin, and will be scrapped if the commission's plans are signed off by MPs following the latest consultation.

Prior to that it was in the now defunct constituency of Dudley East.

The Boundary Commission plans are part of a Government pledge to reduce the number of MPs from 650 to 600.

Pat on the back for Shuttle team

Stourbridge Shuttle staff celebrate their commendation given at the Global Light Rail Awards

AN innovative shuttle service that has become a key part of the transport system in Stourbridge has been recognised at a rail industry awards ceremony.

Pre Metro Operations – which operates the Stourbridge Shuttle between Stourbridge's Junction and Town railway stations – was highly commended in the operator of the year section at the Global Light Rail Awards.

It is the second year in succession that the Shuttle, which is operated alongside London Midland, has been commended.

Pre Metro chief executive Phil Evans said: "We are delighted to be once again recognised by our industry colleagues for our innovative and environmentally-friendly operation here in the Black Country.

"Our staff work tirelessly to provide the Stourbridge Shuttle service every day, with industry-leading levels of reliability."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Christmas tree festival at cone

WORDSLEY'S Red House Glass Cone will be hosting its first Christmas tree festival this December.

Individuals, schools, businesses and organisations are being invited to provide a tree, decorated in the manner that best represents them, and to give a donation that goes to the Mayor of Dudley's charities. Trees can be real, artificial or something in the shape of a tree but can be no taller than five foot. The cone will provide electricity for one set of lights but battery operated lights are welcome.

The Red House Glass Cone, in High Street, is open 10am to 3pm Monday to Friday and 11am to 4pm weekends.

'Great news' as homes complete

A SCHEME to create council homes on the site of a former Tipton primary school has been completed.

Families have moved into the properties at Tibbington Terrace where Princes End Primary School once stood. Seven homes have been built on the site as part of a deal with developer Kier Living.

Sandwell Council's housing boss Councillor Kerrie Carmichael said: "This is great news. The completion of this scheme sees another seven new council homes giving people the opportunity to set down roots."

Care team joins charity bike ride

A team of care workers is playing its part a 2,000-mile cycle relay challenge to raise money for Children in Need.

Staff from Springfield House care home, Codsall, will ride the near 11 miles from Wolverhampton to Broadway Halls care home in Dudley.

The complete route runs from Inverness to Bournemouth before culminating in St Brelade on Jersey. It is not direct but instead connects care homes run by provider Brighterkind.

Having started earlier this month the aim is to finish on November 16, with a target to raise £17,500.

Arson-hit derelict pub may be in facelift plan

A DUDLEY pub which has been derelict for several years may be renovated as part of a development masterplan.

The Metro Bar in Trindle Road could be part of a project to regenerate the site around Cavendish House.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "Plans show that the pub was part of the Cavendish redevelopment area, so I hope that once things get moving it will form part of that." It comes after a fire on the first floor last month.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Brexit? He must think that we are all thick

DO you ever think that some of our public figures are actually Jeremy Beadle style wind-up merchants, liable at any minute to whip off their comedy wig and produce a hidden microphone?

I only ask following the breathtakingly arrogant and out-of-touch statement from John Bercow, Speaker of the House of Commons, during a visit to Wolverhampton University.

Mr Speaker said he was "not a fan" of giving the public a vote on major issues such as Brexit, saying "nuanced and complicated" issues were best left to MPs. In other words, I think he's saying we're a bit thick. Best not to trouble the great unwashed with difficult stuff, just leave it to the intellectual titans at Westminster.

Let us not forget that three of the most prominent parliamentarians wheeled out by the Remain campaign last year were Alan Johnson, Lord Prescott and Sir John Major. Who, before entering Parliament had respectively worked as a postman, a ship's steward and a navvy.

Nothing wrong with that, of course. Indeed, it is surely a good thing to have politicians who come from a similar background to the rest of us.

But they're not exactly rocket scientists, are they? If they can understand Brexit, then surely we can too.

❒ ❒ ❒

GREAT to hear Wolverhampton Council has spent £19,000 on a new "corporate image" for the city. The number of times I have driven through some of the ropier parts of Horseley Fields and thought to myself "what this city really needs is a new logo."

It seems some of this money was spent on tickets for Wolves games and taxi rides, to give the consultants "a feel for the city". Can't say fairer than that, although they would have probably got more of a feel for the city in the subway next to the Mercedes garage.

The council says the consultants "undertook very thorough research over a number of months".

Anyhow, the good news is that the consultants have come up with a new logo, which is essentially a stylised letter "W" and the words "City of Wolverhampton" underneath, and hats off to them. You can't come up with ideas like that on the cheap.

Sadly, though, it has come too late to go on the new "Welcome to Wolverhampton" signs installed earlier this year at a cost of £23,000. Which is rather a shame, as they would have looked really good next to the boarded-up pub in Birmingham Road.

We bought diesels believing they were better for planet

Actress Sian Webber – no such historical character as Lady Dorothy

Dodgy TV subtitles – one reader recalls 'Cold Daddy' for Colonel Gadaffi

Prime Minister Theresa May faces a dilemma over the Chancellor

T for Toxic maybe, but they will stay

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

I WONDER how many of us driving older diesel cars which have now been branded T for Toxic in London, will do exactly the opposite of what the clean-air lobby expects. At a stroke, the market value of our old bangers has been reduced, so we are hardly likely to rush to the showroom and trade them for a shiny new model at a whopping loss. We are far more likely to keep on running them for as long as possible. We bought our diesels in the belief that they were not only economical but also better for the planet. The science changes, the politicians do their virtue-signalling and we take the hit.

A SURVEY for Woman's Hour reveals that the London borough of Islington is the worst place in Britain for women to live. But look at the wider results of this survey on favoured or despised places and one fact becomes blindingly obvious. A lot of women hate cities.

I HEARD a weather forecaster this week refer to sunny spells on "the extreme south coast." Not to be confused with the moderate, mild, rational or marginal south coast.

BRIGHTHOUSE, the so-called rent-to-own retailer, has been ordered to pay nearly £15 million to compensate about 250,000 customers and has been denounced by the Financial Conduct Authority for not being a "responsible lender." A reader reports getting an email, allegedly from BrightHouse, offering a refund and requesting his bank details. It's a scam. Bin it.

RESEARCHERS at Glasgow University reported a couple of years ago that, while English regional accents are vanishing, Scottish accents are thriving. If you doubt that, listen to Jamie Harron, the 27-year-old from Stirling jailed in Dubai for allegedly touching a man's hip, talking to reporters when he arrived at Glasgow Airport. It may have made perfect sense to everyone in Stirling but we Sassenachs were struggling.

THIS sort of interview must pose a dilemma for the TV companies. Imagine the diplomatic incident if the BBC, Sky or ITV started using subtitles for interviews in Scotland.

THE most distressing scene in Gunpowder (BBC1) was the execution of Lady Dorothy Dibdale which required actress Sian Webber to strip naked before being crushed under weights. You can argue that such grisly and obscene detail is vital to tell the true story. Yet the truth is there was no such historical character as Lady Dorothy. She was created for the series, presumably to crank up the gore level.

I REFERRED a few days ago to the Co-op bank ending its policy of sending addressed envelopes with credit-card statements and trying to pretend that we customers asked for it "in our quest towards a paperless future." Making the public think they support some new policy is commonplace. Take the revelation that drivers may soon be prosecuted for any litter dropped from their car, even if somebody else dropped it. Part of Whitehall's justification for this is that a survey revealed 81 per cent of us are angry about the amount of litter on our roads. Well, of course we are. But it's a quantum leap from that to accepting the principle that Citizen A can be punished for the sins of Citizen B. Once that notion gets into English law, where will it end?

THANKS for your memories of dodgy subtitles on television news reports. The technology does not seem to get better. One reader recalls 'Cold Daddy' for Colonel Gadaffi, and 'I ritz eye', the words allegedly uttered by a resigning politician. The recent Storm Ophelia was 'feely'.

A READER tells me she plucked up her courage, strode into a local shop and complained about the "tasteless and grotesque" Halloween decorations which featured blood-stained handprints on the shop window with the warning: "No-One Leaves." Good for her. The media moguls may own the airwaves but the streets are still ours. Defend them.

IS 'spreadsheet Phil' Hammond the most bumbling, blundering Chancellor of the Exchequer in living memory, whose political antennae, if indeed he ever had any, have simply withered out of existence?

Or is he, in fact, much smarter than most people have given him credit for, and just pretending to be gormless? My feeling is that Hammond is indeed a lot smarter, acute and well-meaning than many people have suggested.

Sometimes, you cannot help but get the impression that Hammond, who has been accused of near-sabotage over Brexit, is taunting the Prime Minister to take drastic action over his post. A rampant Hammond on the Tory backbenches could be real trouble for Theresa May.

So the Prime Minister faces a dilemma. Dumping your Chancellor is no minor matter, but how long can she tolerate this continued behaviour from a Chancellor who does not bother even to be subtle in his machinations?

TALKING POINT

Dog tired of dirty mutts in 'my space'

THE confession I am about to make is likely to shock, perhaps repulse and may lead to me becoming a social pariah.

But I refuse to maintain this veil of shame any longer. My name is Diane Davies and I don't like dogs!

This revelation will have consequences. Whenever I let any hint of my dislike show I am usually subjected to interrogation and a verbal bashing.

To the extent that I felt forced to hide this guilty secret for fear it could damage my career. With one previous boss I even pretended to like the dirty, needy creatures because they were a big dog lover.

People are genuinely surprised that I do not like dogs. Not that I wish them any harm of course. I just don't want them jumping up me demanding attention and pulling my clothes.

Is it right that whenever I venture out on a pleasant stroll at one of the many beauty spots on our doorstep that I can expect a mud-soaked mutt to come running up to me? The added sight of one of my children is guaranteed to throw a dog into a frenzy as an apparent play pal is on the scene.

Do the owners apologise profusely for their over-exuberant pet? Sometimes, but mostly it is accompanied by a beaming smile and the reassurance 'don't worry, they won't hurt you."

What they are really saying is the animal has never actually hurt THEM. The dog has never met me before and hasn't encountered my daughter who is likely to want to hang onto its tail and want a piggyback. Even the most mild-mannered pet might find this annoying.

Friends and family are quite distraught that I do not want to pet their beloved pet. While I am quite distraught that the beloved pet is taking up half the sofa and when I finally get a seat I will be leaving the house wearing a blanket of animal hair.

Cynophobia is the fear of dogs, an actual medical condition which suggests that though we might be known as a nation of dog lovers not everyone is signed up to it. Bit like Brexit.

I don't have a phobia of dogs, I just prefer to stay away from them - if only they would do the same. In my experience dogs can sniff out people who are not dog-lovers and will come boisterously bounding up to us just to make us look bad.

It's not that I hate animals, I have two gorgeous cats. And life would be very dull if we were all the same and please don't judge me because I don't share your love of dogs. I'm a nice person really but please keep your mutts well away from me.

DIANE DAVIES

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EU blocking Brexit progress, so move on

I BELIEVE that the UK should seriously prepare for a Brexit that involves walking away from the EU completely.

This could well mean that neither side gets anything from our decision to leave the EU. I draw this conclusion from considering press reports of the mood of the current negotiations between the UK and EU representatives.

Our negotiators offer ways forward and the EU negotiators reject them. They say we are not offering enough to satisfy the future of EU citizens, how the UK/Eire border will work and how much we are prepared to pay to leave. What they are really trying to achieve is not a solution to these subjects but to prolong the negotiating exercise.

I think the EU negotiators know only too well that a free trade agreement between the two parties is the sensible way forward and once they start to address the issue they will come under intense pressure from EU industrial interests.

In view of our membership of the EU for the last few decades this is, surely, the correct way to proceed, however, this would go against the main tenet of EU membership which is free trade = free movement and they know only too well that the UK voted to leave the EU primarily to bring control of immigration back to our shores.

We also have to consider, especially in relation to recent comments from Mr Juncker, that the unelected that control the EU are constantly seeking to establish a single European establishment with common taxes, common laws and an EU army. Negotiating free trade agreements is not their primary concern anymore!

MICHAEL CALLDINE
Kingswinford

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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It's no spin, my theory on climate

AFTER all of the talk about weather and earthquakes, my mind has been playing with a thought, but because it concerned the revolution of the earth, until this morning I could not think of a suitable way to describe what was in my head. Then bingo!

Take a slice segment through the earth and you get a wheel. At the centre, is the hub and on the outside is the rim. If you upset the balance, you get trouble. So you keep taking away from the centre, and adding the substance removed to the outside, the wheel spins faster, doesn't it? If the outside is not loaded evenly it wobbles, doesn't it?

For many years, man has been taking from the centre of the earth coal, oil, etc and making concrete and tarmac structures. All adding height and weight to the surface of the earth causing it to spin faster. Are my thoughts so far out from what is happening?

PETER COLE
Kingswinford

More begging on streets than ever

IS it just me or does the number of people begging in Dudley town centre increase by the week? Over the past few weeks it's got worse and worse, people openly begging asking for money and cigarettes, sat in disused shop doorways.

Now don't get we wrong, I know full well that people fall on hard times through one reason or another, but you don't want to keep seeing and being subjected to this whilst trying to do a bit of shopping.

Surely there's some organisation or other that can help them to save them having to resort to this way of life just to survive? No wonder there's so many empty shops in the town, potential shop owners must come along and see these unfortunate people begging on the street and in shop doorways and well, let's just say, it don't look too good does it?

LEE THOMAS
Brierley Hill

Let's just cut our EU losses now

MAY I please respond to Alan T Harrison's reply to my recent letter regarding our trade deficit with the EU?

Perhaps I should just refer to him as Harrison as he does not refer to myself, or indeed Roger Watts either, by using anything other than just a surname.

I am not exactly sure just what Harrison means by proportionality, but having weaved his complex web of calculations that supposedly demolish my argument, none of it can refute the established fact that in trade we are in deficit to the EU to the extent of approximately £60 billion per annum, and this fact should give the UK negotiators a strong hand.

With regard to a trade deal, the common sense outcome for all concerned would, of course, be for the UK and the EU to continue to trade within a free trade area, without payment of a fee on either side.

M B WILLIS ACIB
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So many lovely pets, it'll be a tough choice

AND just like Noah's Ark they keep coming in – but not in twos more like hundreds!

If you have sent in pictures and they have not appeared on the page don't worry. We have not got space to carry them all but they will all be considered for the shortlist, then we will print the 10 chosen.

It is going to be a difficult job for you readers to judge the winner.

So keep the pictures coming in.

ANIMAL CRACKERS

Send us a picture of your beloved pet and, as well as the chance to see your pet in print, you could also win a £100 cash prize. It can be any animal as long as it is a pet belonging to you or a member of your family.

Our Chronicle judges are simply looking for interesting pictures. We will select 10 of our favourite pictures and then it is up to our readers to decide on the winner.

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Centre closes despite £10,000 investment

MP backs kill policy on ISIS Brits

Ian Austin: 'The last thing we want is for them to be able to come back and attack people in the UK'

AN MP has backed the Government's policy of killing British people who go to fight with ISIS.

Dudley MP Ian Austin spoke after Government Minister Rory Stewart said converts to the terror group can expect to be killed given the threat they pose to British security.

It comes as British Deash recruiter Sally-Anne Jones, dubbed the White Widow, was killed in a US drone strike earlier this month.

Mr Austin said on Twitter: "I have to say Rory Stewart is right about dealing with ISIS terrorists. It's not possible to arrest them in Syria."

He added: "The last thing we want is for them to be able to come back and attack people in the UK.

"There's no getting away from the fact that these people are fascists who have murdered charity workers, sexually enslaved young women, buried older ones alive and thrown gay men off buildings, as well as organising attacks to kill people of all backgrounds in the UK.

"I think people in Dudley will agree with me that we have to face up to this."

A COMMUNITY centre that served families throughout Dudley has closed suddenly.

Wren's Nest Community Centre in Summer Road shut its doors last month , with decline in use and sponsorship cited as the main reasons.

Councillors say it comes months after more than £10,000 was spent on a new central heating system. But despite the investment, which came from the councillors' community forum fund for supporting communities, the centre has now shut.

The facility, which is believed to have been run by a local church, was used by community and sports groups, as well as elderly people.

Councillor Ken Finch, who represents the Castle and Priory ward, said: "They were having problems with central heating, and us as ward councillors got them a new boiler system.

Saddened

"We were told that it would be used seven days a week. Then we were informed via the committee that they had suddenly closed it. It is sad for the estate. We were told it was due to lack of people using it and sponsors."

Councillor Margaret Aston, who regularly used the centre for surgeries, said she was saddened by its closure but admitted that numbers using it had been declining in recent years. She said: "I don't think there were many people going in.

"When I was first a councillor they used to have lots going on, including meals for the elderly twice a day. I was hoping it would catch on again. It is a shame to see it closed but I suppose it is a sign of the times."

She said she hoped the centre could be reopened and said she was disappointed to see the building close so soon after the investment in the central heating system.

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Memories are stirred by Marlene

Kingswinford TG

AT the monthly meeting held on October 9, chairman Enid Fennell welcomed a new member Val Ellis. Among the correspondence were two letters form headquarters, one urging the guild to participate in bringing the anti-slavery demonstrations to the public notice.

When this was read out, members became were aware that the movement's intentions were not made known to Townswomen's Guilds early enough to enable them to join in, even though TG is very much against modern slavery, having brought the subject to public notice a few years ago. The second letter was also read out and some members made comments.

Sheila Watt sorted out the payments due for the Christmas luncheon at The Lodge. The remaining business was soon completed and the main event began.

Marlene Watson entertained in her own inimitable Black Country style. It was suggested that those who grew up outside the area sat near someone able to act as interpreter, or just laugh when everyone else did.

Some memories were stirred, many of which revealed pearls of wisdom. Brenda Greenaway was thanked for the beautiful floral display, which she donated as an extra raffle prize. Raffle prizes were won by Elaine Skelling and Brenda Adkin. Tickets for the community raffle were on sale.

Sue tells of great Aussie adventure

Dudley South Ladies Luncheon Club

Diana White, speaker Sue Langley and Beryl Bury

AT the October lunch at The Lodge, Wellington Road, Dudley chairman Pauline Handley was delighted to welcome a record number of members and one visitor Margaret Adams.

After an excellent three-course meal members settled back to listen Sue Langley's 'Great Aussie Adventure'.

It began with a chance meeting on a cruise when Sue formed a friendship with a couple from Australia who invited her to their cattle station at Albany, three-quarters of an hour south of Perth.

Apart from herding cattle she encountered tiger snakes which her hosts roasted, crushed and scattered around the house, called peppering, to prevent snakes getting in. She moved on to the wine region of Adelaide to stay with relatives and travelled to Kangaroo Island with its white sandy beaches and seal colonies.

In Freemantle, she visited the notorious prison which closed to inmates in 1991, now restored offering overnight accommodation and weddings.

Gentle exercises raise a laugh

Dudley Rheumatoid Arthritis Group

DUDLEY RA Support Group met on October 5 and shared a happy time with Merry Maggie. This consisted of simple exercises constructed in such a way as to raise a laugh. It worked!

At the next meeting on November 2, Chris Smith will talk about the work that goes into producing a magazine. The meeting will be held as usual at The King William pub, Pensnett Road, from 1.30pm. The meeting on December 7 is the annual Christmas dinner at The Lodge. Anyone living with any of the many types of arthritic conditions is welcome at meetings. Call 01902 676136 or 01902 885734 for more details.

Next year's programme starts on February 1 with a talk from one of the doctors from the Research Unit at Russells Hall Hospital.

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Second daily Brum to Dubai flight launches

AIRLINE Emirates has started its second daily A380 service out of Birmingham to Dubai, less than two years after its inaugural A380 flight from the city.

The introduction of a twice a day A380 service yesterday was driven by huge demand from passengers in Birmingham to travel on the iconic aircraft. Since the first A380 service from Dubai to Birmingham launched in March 2016, nearly 500,000 passengers have flown on the aircraft, which can carry 615, between the two cities.

Emirates started flying to Birmingham in 2000 as a daily service to Dubai, operated by a 278-seat Airbus A330. Since then, Emirates has carried over 5.2 million passengers between Dubai and Birmingham.

In its first full year of operations out of the city, Emirates carried just under 70,000 passengers. The growth in popularity of the route is clear, with more than 40,000 passengers carried during a record July alone.

Laurie Berryman, Emirates vice president, UK, said: "Now in its seventeenth year, we have seen a pronounced growth in the popularity of our Birmingham service and look forward to a bright future with our twice daily A380 service."

Doreen wings it over to care home

Doreen with manager Marc Cohen and owner Veronica Lovell

BLACK Country comic Doreen Tipton took a break from her one-woman show to open a new wing at a care home.

Doreen, who will star in a panto at The Grand Theatre later this year, visited Veronica House in Tipton to open the wing which has been designed to help care for people with dementia.

Care home manager Marc Cohen said Doreen 'was a really warm and funny lady' and her comedic antics helped make last week's opening a success and the residents enjoyed her visit.

Doreen took the time to chat to residents and also orchestrated a sing-along, including We'll Meet Again by Vera Lynn. A plaque was put in place to commemorate her visit. Bosses said the new wing will mean residents will be able to receive better care.

Later this year Doreen will star in Jack and the Beanstalk at the Grand. Her role in this year's panto follows on from her successful cameo in last year's performance of Aladdin where she played The Lazy Empress.

Austin in Cypriot tax evasion claim

IAN Austin has accused Cyprus of breaching money-laundering rules by helping Russia with a politically-motivated lawsuit.

The Dudley North MP has written to Stephen Barclay, economic secretary to the Treasury, to recommend that Cyprus be rated 'non-compliant' with EU money-laundering rules. Mr Barclay is understood to be looking into the issue.

Cyprus is under scrutiny for helping Russian investigators to pursue tax evasion allegations against Bill Browder, a hedge fund manager-turned-human rights campaigner.

The Council of Europe has told member states not to help Moscow with its case, launched after Mr Browder's Hermitage fund uncovered a $230 million fraud involving Russian officials a decade ago.

In his letter, Mr Austin also said that Cypriot authorities had failed to conduct proper investigations' into the original fraud.

Slow progress poses a new danger for the Hippodrome

THE restoration of Dudley Hippodrome could be under threat after a council leader said he believed 'not much progress' had been made by campaigners trying to save the landmark former theatre.

Patrick Harley admitted the authority had started to think about other uses for the building on Castle Hill in the event of the rescue not being a success.

The council leader said the Black Country Hippodrome group had been given a 'generous amount of time to get their act together to make a viable business case for retaining the Hippodrome'.

A report is due to go to cabinet on the next step in the saga. A previous council plan had been to demolish the building to create a public open space

Campaigners have requested a 20-year extension to its current five-year lease which they say is too short to attract investment.

Councillor Harley insisted they would continue to have the council's support if they could 'meet their milestones' but suggested time could be running out.

Joe's show with Daliso raises £7k

A SHOW which featured top TV comics has raised £7,000 for Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Joe Lycett, from Hall Green, and Daliso Chaponda, a Britain's Got Talent finalist, were among the performers at the special show at the Glee Club in Birmingham which raised money for the hospital charity, which helps children in the UK and in Daliso's homeland of Malawi.

Rising star Lycett has appeared on TV In Live At The Apollo, The One Show and tomorrow night (Friday) in QI and Travel Man 48 Hours.

The show, held at the Arcadian Centre venue last week, was a sell-out.

The Glee's director, Mark Tughan, said: "We never expected to raise so much."

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Rail project wall is to cost £500k more

A MAJOR project bringing together the Midland Metro extension and light rail centre development in a Black Country town will cost half-a-million pounds more than expected.

A 250-metre concrete retaining wall is due to be built next to Tipton Road in Dudley but will now cost £4.33m rather than the initial £3.8m estimate following a 'review' of construction costs.

Dudley Council will be applying for funding to pay for the scheme.

Bosses say work on the wall must start as soon as possible to avoid the project being delayed.

The barrier is needed to divide the Midland Metro and light rail centre, two huge developments planned for Dudley in the next decade.

Design fees for the wall have also increased from £195,000 to £294,000 – though it is expected this cost will also be met by the West Midlands Combined Authority.

Dudley Council has agreed to spend the extra £100,000 before knowing if the funding bid will be successful. Bosses said they believed the risk of not getting the money back is 'deemed to be low'.

A council report said: "The juxtaposition of the Very Light Rail (VLR) and Metro requires the design and construction of a 250 metre contiguous reinforced concrete piled 'shared retaining wall' to support the delivery of the Metro which would be routed across the western edge of the proposed Very Light Rail site, adjacent to Tipton Road and through to Station Drive.

"This needs to be progressed now in order to support delivery of the VLR project and facilitate the Metro in due course; it is not practicable to wait for final approval of the Metro before proceeding."

Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley said: "The construction of this retaining wall is critical in delivering both the Very Light Rail and Metro extension projects."

An artist's impression of the light rail centre proposed for a site between Tipton Road and Castle Hill

£6m primary school scheme for Coseley now gathering pace

AMBITIOUS plans to build a new primary and secondary school on the former Coseley School site are moving a step closer.

Council bosses have agreed to lease the land to build a £6 million primary school, and continue negotiations for a secondary phase.

The new school is earmarked for the Henne Road site of the secondary school which closed in August due to dwindling pupil numbers, which caused dismay for many parents and also saw pupils move to Sedgley.

Dudley Council is seeking to meet a shortfall of school places and it does not want to see the old school buildings become a target for vandals. Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust is to set up Coseley Technology Primary, due to open in September 2018, after being granted a lease from the council.

Councillor Anne Millward, Dudley's cabinet member for children's services said: "It will be a wonderful thing. It would become the first school in the borough from nursery right the way through to secondary."

At Dudley Council's cabinet meeting last Thursday, council bosses agreed to lease the school buildings to Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust for two years while new buildings are erected.

MP calls for action after woman dies in collision

AN MP has called for urgent action on a road where a mother was killed in a horror crash.

Ian Austin has joined hundreds of people in calling for safety measures on Wood Road in Lower Gornal following the death of Vikki Jones, aged 30.

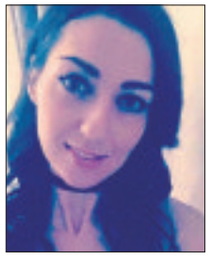
Dudley North MP Mr Austin, said 'no one wants anything like this to happen again' and will be 'putting pressure' on the council with people's concerns.

By Jamie Brassington

Ms Jones died at the scene of the crash, which was near to her home, on September 22.

A 21-year-old man – who was arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving – has been released on police bail.

Three cars – a BMW, Alfa Romeo and Mitsubishi – were involved in the collision at the junction of Wood Avenue.



Vikki Jones died at the scene

Petition

Hundreds of people have signed a petition calling for improved road safety at the location.

Mr Austin said: "Hundreds of residents have already signed a petition asking for the something to be done to make sure this tragic accident never happens again.

"I have written to everyone in the area asking for their opinion and I'll be putting pressure on Dudley Council to take on board what people are saying as no one wants anything like this to happen again."

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, said the council would await a report from police but Dudley Council would always listen to the concerns of residents.

She said: "Our thoughts are very much with the family affected by this tragic incident.

"We have been working with police and looking at that particular stretch of road following this incident to see what options, if any, we have to improve safety along there. We are also more than happy to listen to the views of ward councillors and the local MP in planning any measures there in the future."

JB's reunion planned

A reunion for music fans who attended a famous rock venue in Dudley is planned for the new year. The return of JB's, celebrating the club that was on King Street and later on Castle Hill, will be held on April 21 but details are yet to be confirmed. Sam Jukes, who started the club in 1969, is involved. Bands including U2 and Blur played the venue.

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Third hit by spending cuts in daily life

AUSTERITY from a cutback in Government funding is impacting on the daily lives of 34 per cent of people across the Midlands, according to a survey.

The survey of 1,071 adults across the UK found that nationally 33 per cent say they have been directly affected by spending cuts – up from 27 per cent last year.

Of those surveyed, 63 per cent said that Government spending should be increased, even if that means increases to some taxes.

This has risen from 59 per cent when the same survey was carried out last year.

When asked to pick two or three areas of public spending that should be protected in future from any spending cuts, 80 per cent chose the NHS, 49 per cent education and schools and 32 per cent the police.

The survey features in The State of the State 2017-18, Deloitte's annual report on the pressures on public finances and the challenges that are being faced by public services across the country.

Caroline Hope, public sector partner at Deloitte in the Midlands, said: "This data shows people are increasingly seeing the effects of cuts in their everyday lives, along with broader appetite for higher levels of public spending."

Drag star bringing music tour to city

THE winner of TV show RuPaul's Drag Race is bringing her new tour to Birmingham.

Aaron Coady, better known by stage name Sharon Needles, competed on season four of the reality TV show. Sharon will perform her Battle Axe tour at Birmingham's O2 Institute2 on April 26. To book, visit academymusicgroup.com.

Con me head son! Benefits cheat caught out on pitch

Flog It! fans fill auction showroom

Host Paul Martin with Eithne Johnston from Kingswood, near Albrighton, at Aston's Auctioneers in Dudley for BBC Flog It!

A QUIRKY bicycle and selection of Beatles autographs were among the items to be auctioned off when Flog It! hit the Black Country.

The plastic concept bike was designed in the early 1980s and sold off by Robert Berry from Walsall – while the Fab Four's signatures netted one seller £1,500 more than expected.

Keen buyers and eager sellers packed Aston's Auctioneers & Valuers in Tower Street, Dudley to the rafters for the event, which was filmed by the BBC.

Mr Berry's plastic bike was one of the day's most interesting items. It was made as a concept idea between 1980 and 1982 and went for £190.

A postcard signed by each member of The Beatles went to a buyer for £3,500, after being valued at around £2,000. Patricia Holland, from Rhyl, who had kept the autographs in her family since the 1960s, said she was going to put the money towards a holiday.

The touring BBC One show was at the family-run auction house, owned by father and son Phil and Chris Aston.

The most expensive lot was a £9,800 diamond ring.

Presenter Paul Martin said: "What I was really enthusiastic about and one of the most exciting items of the day was a Beatles autograph."

STRIKER Gary Wilson ended up in court after scoring an own goal during a Wolverhampton Sunday League match. The 30-year-old put in an astonishing performance while pocketing more than £14,000 in Disability Living Allowance by claiming he could barely walk, sources said.

The No 9 – described as a 'prolific' scorer – told benefit officials he needed help to put on his shoes and socks and had difficulty getting out of bed and into the bath without assistance.

Wilson, from St Chad's Road, Bilston, maintained he needed 'physical support' after a few minutes on his feet because of arthritis in his hips and spine. And a year before the fraud started he maintained he needed crutches to get about.

But the lie he had lived for three and a half years was kicked into touch by the skills he displayed during a Wolverhampton Sunday League game secretly filmed by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) investigators.

Wilson – case adjourned

Tackles

The video shows him raining shots in on goal and making tackles without any sign of discomfort while playing for Steelman's Lounge FC. Stats from the website of another Wolverhampton Sunday League club he played for in the 2014/15 season – Willenhall side Loft FC – show he scored 26 goals.

Wilson appeared at Walsall Magistrates Court to admit illegally claiming Disability Living Allowance from November 2012 to May last year by failing to reveal his capabilities had improved. He also pleaded guilty to illegally claiming around £500 worth of Employment and Support Allowance by not declaring he was working between January 2 and February 22, 2013. The case was adjourned until November 15 after the court was told he was feeling unwell.

Gary Wilson in action on the pitch

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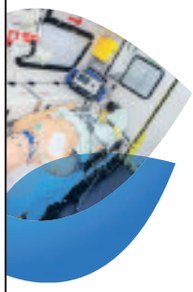

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The open evening takes place on Tuesday November 7, from 5.30pm-7pm.

Chief Constable Dave Thompson addressing MPs

Return of traditional crimes 'piles up pressure on police'

By Peter Madeley

THE West Midlands' police chief has warned that a rise in 'traditional crimes' is piling pressure on the region's force as he took the battle for increased funding to Westminster.

Chief Constable Dave Thompson said spikes in crimes involving guns and knives as well as burglary were 'back as a challenge' having previously declined.

While addressing the cross-party Home Affairs Committee in the House of Commons on the future of policing, he also called for a national debate on the 'horrifying' scale of people viewing child abuse images online, insisting that prosecuting offenders was 'not going to be an answer on its own'.

Mr Thompson, who is the lead for the National Police Chiefs Council for Finance, said there were 'red lights' over the ability of West Midlands Police to perform. And he admitted that its effectiveness had been 'curtailed' over the past year due to the continued impact of funding cuts stretching resources.

"I look at neighbourhood officers and they are frustrated that some of the preventative work they want to do is not happening. I look at the kind of reactive investigation loads, and we are finding prioritising that harder," he told the MPs.

Professor Brian Cox back for live show

HAVING set two Guinness World Record titles with his previous sell-out live UK and Ireland tour, Professor Brian Cox is set to return to the West Midlands.

Taking audiences to the edge of our current understanding about the origin and evolution of our Solar System and the Universe, Professor Brian Cox Live 2019 offers a fascinating insight into the workings of nature at the most fundamental level.

He will once again be joined by co-host of The Infinite Monkey Cage and award-winning comedian Robin Ince to oversee an audience Q&A.

Cox is Professor of Particle Physics at The University of Manchester, The Royal Society Professor for Public Engagement in Science and a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Professor Brian Cox will appear at Arena Birmingham on February 23, 2019.

Assaults on health staff tops 15,000 in five years

By Peter Madeley

MENTAL health staff in the West Midlands have been subjected to violent attacks by patients more than 15,000 times over the last five years, new figures have revealed.

And the number of assaults in the region's mental health units has rocketed by 23 per cent since 2012-13 leading to calls for tougher security measures to protect workers.

Figures obtained via a Freedom of Information request showed that over the period there was a total of 23,363 attacks across the region's four mental health trusts – the Black Country Partnership, Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership, South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Trust, and Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust – equating to an average of 13 attacks a day.

Sara Gorton

Of those, 15,631 involved patients attacking staff, and 7,679 were patient-on-patient assaults.

The figures also show that on 54 occasions, staff attacked patients, while there were three incidents where staff attacked other workers.

South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Trust saw the largest number of incidents with 9,728 attacks. Across the region, there were 4,099 attacks reported in 2012-13 and 5,052 in 2016-17 – an increase of 23 per cent.

The data was sourced by the Lib Dems, whose West Midlands spokesman Rob Quarmby said: "We should take a zero tolerance approach against anyone who attacks any of our staff either physically or verbally and we work with local police in the management of aggressive and violent individuals. The safety of staff and patients is the most important thing and we take the issue of hospital security very seriously. Staff should be told to report all violent incidents to the police"

Public service union Unison revealed that in a survey of more than 1,000 mental health staff, 42 per cent of respondents said they had been victims of violence over the last year.

Sara Gorton, head of health at Unison, said staff shortages meant fewer people were around to deal with rising numbers of patients with complex needs. "This is leading to an increase in violence and a working environment that makes it more difficult to retain staff," she said.

The Department of Health said it was 'completely unacceptable' for NHS staff to face violence or aggression at work. A DoH spokesman said £11.6bn had been invested last year and it was creating 21,000 new posts by 2021.

Tourism booming as business hits £850m

TOURISM has helped boost a county's economy by more than £850 million and created 17,000 jobs, figures show.

Tourism has also been rising as visitors continue to flock to Worcestershire and the Wyre Forest district. Councillors are bidding to get an even bigger slice of the tourism pie to help attract more investment.

The most recent statistics show more than 16 million tourist trips are being made to Worcestershire every year. Visitors to the Wyre Forest district, which boasts the Severn Valley Railway and the West Midland Safari Park, also attracted more people.

Councillor Ken Pollock said: "It's fantastic news. We are a world-class county and the more people who enjoy our beautiful countryside and picturesque towns, the better."

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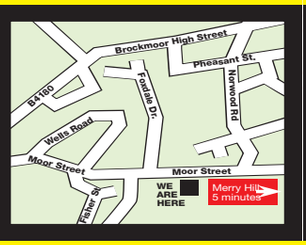

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Growing business is clearly a favourite with its customers

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Claire Stockley (Sales) and Dan Butcher (Business)

Commercial feature

MARKET leading Stourbridge double glazing business Carera Windows has fitted more than half a million quality windows and doors over the past 28 years.

The company based in Junction Road, Audnam, started out 28 years ago to serve the Stourbridge area but as it has grown it has moved on to serve neighbouring areas including Halesowen, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Worcester.

The business moved to its present base 20 years ago. Carera offer a full range of windows and doors and also install a full range of conservatories, orangeries and living spaces.

Happy

The company prides itself on having a depth of knowledge in all aspects of the products it offers and industry regulations. The company is fully conversant with all current regulations within the industry. A key aim is to provide a level of customer service that is second to none.

More than 70 per cent of all Carera Windows' home sales come via personal recommendation from happy clients, which number many thousands. It takes pride in completing every project to the highest standard.

From the start, Carera is committed to offering only top-quality products, expert installations and unbeatable personal service to both private and commercial customers. Its experienced team is committed to working closely with local authorities, education authorities, landlords, architects and contractors on its commercial work. Carera Windows is keen to get involved in any kind of commercial project from industrial units to office conversions, new build to refurbishments and renovations.

The company's showroom at its base is open Monday to Friday. 9am to 5pm and Saturday, 10am to 4pm. It offers a wide range of products in various sizes and colours, manufactured using PVCu, aluminium, GRP and hardwood. Carera also installs entrance doors ,sliding patio doors , french double doors and porches

Carera Windows was started by owner and managing director Mark Crumpton in 1989, originally from home as a small enterprising double glazing company supplying the local area. Its housing association glazing contracts and commercial premises work now also takes the business across the country.

Carera prides itself on offering honest and professional expert advice, installing 100 per cent high quality products, sensible prices and outstanding customer service.

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Severn Trent hit by £700k fraud over housing sales

FIVE men defrauded Severn Trent Water out of around £700,000 by fraudulently selling properties owned by the company, a court heard.

A jury sitting at Birmingham Crown Court was told how 50-year-old Edward Barker joined Severn Trent in June 2009 and was employed to manage their housing stock portfolio.

Barker identified a total of 21 houses to sell in the Midlands – including ones in Stourbridge, Oldbury, Wolverhampton and Birmingham. Barker, of Wake Green Park, Moseley, Birmingham, undervalued these properties through fake valuations and failed to advertise the sale to the public.

The houses were instead sold to his friends and associates at an artificially-low price and then sold at full price.

Complaint

Following a complaint made by a member of the public to the utility company relating to the lack of marketing, Severn Trent conducted an internal investigation.

Barker, Manoj Chohan, Terry Croft, of Cheltenham, and Dinesh Chudasama, of Sparkhill, Birmingham denied the charges but were all found guilty of conspiracy to commit fraud by false representation.

A judge sentenced Barker to three years in jail, 49-year-old Chohan, of Birmingham to 21 months suspended for two years, 50-year-old Croft to a 12-month community order with 120 hours of unpaid work and 51-year-old Chudasama to a two year term which was suspended for two years.

A fifth man, 44-year-old Matthew Biggin, of Coventry, pleaded guilty to the fraud at an earlier hearing and was sentenced to 12 months, suspended for two years.

New homes and roads proposed

A MASTERPLAN including 300 homes and a one-way system has been unveiled to tackle congestion and pollution in Kidderminster.

Concerns about air quality in the Horsefields area of the town have been voiced by councillors with roads from Wolverhampton, Stourbridge and other parts of the Black Country funnelling traffic along the town's streets.

Developers and councillors are working on plans that would see part of the town 'unlocked' by creating a spur road and reconfiguring the existing highway.

Councillor Ian Hardiman said: "The proposed major regeneration scheme for the Churchfields area of Kidderminster involves building up to 300 new homes, relocating the CMS garage and associated highway works."

Box-it Bill aims to prove big hit in the ring

He's been known as a political bruiser but now UKIP politician Bill Etheridge is really ready to trade blows

HE'S had his fair share of verbal battles over the years, but now Bill Etheridge is getting ready to rumble in a charity boxing scrap.

The UKIP Euro MP is strapping on the gloves for the first time to raise funds for the homelessness charity New Roots.

The Sedgley councillor is being put through his paces at the Ultimate Fitness gym in Bilston, while a new diet has seen him ditch the meat pies and kebabs for boiled eggs and tuna as he bids to meet his fighting weight.

The event from 6.30pm on Saturday, November 11, is at the Bilston Imperial Banqueting Suite against with an, as yet, unnamed opponent.

Hundreds still use mobile at the wheel

MORE than 300 people have been caught using their mobile phone while driving since new laws were introduced.

A freedom of information request has revealed Staffordshire Police had issued 336 fines and penalty point endorsements since March, when stricter regulations around using mobile phones whilst driving came into play. Since March 1, drivers who use a hand-held phones have faced receiving six points on their licence and a £200 fine – up from the previous penalty of three points and £100.

However, the rules continue to be ignored across the county, with police chiefs stating community speed watch groups are now sending information to the police informing them of people they have seen using their phone whilst driving.

Michelle Shaker from Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership said: "When new legislation was introduced we saw a spike in the number of penalties being issued as part of the national awareness campaign.

"Moving forward, enforcement of the new law is about ensuring motorists understand the level of risk in using a mobile phone whilst driving and most importantly in changing their behaviour to prevent them from exposing others to their risk."

Wrestling night to help charity

A PROFESSIONAL wrestling show will raise funds for a children's epilepsy charity on November 10 at 6.30pm at the British Legion in Ruiton Street, Dudley. Entrance to the show for The Daisy Garland charity costs £10 for adults, £6 children or £25 for a family ticket. Contact 07874141170 or 07855276573.

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Achievement levels for Halesowen College students are excellent

Apprenticeships are growing in popularity at Halesowen College

Staff support all students throughout their Halesowen experience

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Go along to the open events on Friday, November 3, between 4pm and 8pm and Saturday, November 4, between 10am and 4pm to discover how the college can help you take your own personal route to success.

By making Halesowen College your number one choice, you will be able to choose from the

Commercial feature

region's biggest range of courses, at all levels and an ability to combine subjects will help you to tailor a programme that best suits you. Whether you have your sights on university, a vocational qualification or an apprenticeship, the highly professional staff will be available to give you advice and guidance and help at every stage of the decision-making process.

Achievement levels for Halesowen College students are excellent and progression to further and higher education and employment is outstanding. This year, 98 per cent of students achieved an A-level pass and 31 per cent attained high grades A*, A or B – 32 subjects achieved an outstanding 100 per cent pass rate! Vocational results were equally impressive, with 222 students gaining Triple Distinction Star grades in their Level 3 Extended Diplomas. As a result over 750 Halesowen students have progressed to university this autumn.

Apprenticeships are also growing in popularity and Halesowen College offers an exciting range of opportunities for you to get the qualifications that employers are looking for, while earning a wage.

Apprentices are highly likely to secure permanent employment at the end of their programme – 93.7 per cent of Halesowen apprentices who completed their apprenticeship in 2016/17 progressed to full-time employment.

Visitors to the college's open events will also have the opportunity to see for themselves the fantastic facilities students enjoy in a modern and easily accessible campus.

All curriculum areas have benefitted in the last few years from an extensive development programme and whether your interests are academic, scientific, technological or creative, Halesowen College is one of the best equipped colleges to help you succeed.

A college spokesman said: "Our students are at the heart of everything we do and we want to support them throughout their Halesowen experience. "Students can access support from their personal coach and learning support staff.

"Financial assistance is also available and nine out of 10 of our current students travel to Halesowen on our free college buses.

"Make Halesowen College your number one choice. Come to our Open Events, meet staff and students and see yourself as having the successful future you deserve."

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Fury over ordeal of 'real-life Cinderella'

A CHILDREN'S charity has condemned the 'barbaric' treatment of a young girl – as readers vented their fury at her 'horrifying' ordeal.

The girl was banished to an outhouse for 12 months in what has been described as a 'real life Cinderella' case.

She was locked out of her family's Wolverhampton home at night, starved of food and forced to wear cast-off clothes – while her brother and sisters lived a full, normal life. The girl's mother, pregnant with her fifth child, along with her stepfather, both in their 40s, have each been jailed for four years and three months after admitting child cruelty.

But the case has sparked a furious reaction, with the couple's sentence attacked as 'too lenient'.

The outhouse where the girl was forced to sleep

Vigilant

After they were sentenced an NSPCC boss described the girl's treatment as 'barbaric' and said the case 'served as a warning' to everyone to be vigilant in spotting signs of child cruelty.

Readers questioned whether the sentence was tough enough, with 99 per cent of 3,100 poll respondents saying the couple should have been jailed for longer.

Lorraine Slattery said: "They should have got a lot longer. Poor child I hope she gets all the help she needs to get her life back on track and finds good foster parents."

Narinder Dhaliwal said: "Disgusting sentence. Poor poor child. On the doorstep of us all and horrifying that it goes on. How did it go on for four years undetected by anyone." Alison Lewis posted: "Can't believe they only got four years for this barbaric treatment of this poor girl."

Sarah Standley wrote: "Four-year sentences? Where is the justice in that?"

The maximum sentence for child cruelty according to the Sentencing Council is 10 years. For a Category 2 offence sentences range from two to five years. Judge Amjad Nawaz, sitting at Wolverhampton Crown Court, sentenced the pair in the Wolverhampton case.

They were given a 10 per cent reduction on their sentences for pleading guilty before a trial. Sandra McNair, NSPCC West Midlands head of service, said: "Instead of love and affection, this vulnerable victim was forced to endure barbaric treatment at the hands of adults who should have been caring and attentive. No child should ever have to forage through bins for scraps of food or sleep outside in the freezing cold.

"This case serves as a warning to everyone that we must all be vigilant in spotting the signs of child neglect and cruelty. Anyone concerned about a child can contact the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. Children can speak to a dedicated counsellor at Childline free and confidentially on 0800 1111 or via childline.org.uk."

West Midlands Police said it moved swiftly to protect the child and arrest the two after officers had been informed of the cruelty.

Problems postpone 'moon bear' concert

A ONE-OFF unique charity show starring Rick Wakeman and led by a Black Country production company has been called off.

The ambitious Over the Moon show, arranged by Stourbridge-based Base Video Productions, has been postponed after hitting 'unforeseen technical and practical problems.'

Keyboards supremo Wakeman, who was at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre this week, and international artist Maria Rud were leading the Over the Moon show.

A-list stars Ricky Gervais, Joanna Lumley and Peter Egan all took part in a video urging people to support the show which was taking place at the spectacular Queen's House in Greenwich, London, on December 10, in aid of the charity Animals Asia.

Live

The show aimed to combine art, music and architecture. The former Yes musician's compositions were to be translated into live artworks by Rud, painting onto a lightbox, and her creations then projected onto the building. Audience members would stand, sit or move around watching Wakeman and Rud closely as they collaborated on their art.

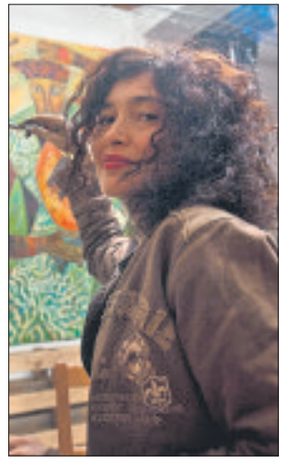
The Over the Moon set promised a blend of classic Wakeman material with new compositions written especially for the event.

Lined up to go on stage with Rick was son Adam, percussionist Ed Scull and leading London vocal ensemble the English Chamber Choir, conducted by Guy Protheroe.

The pioneering show is being arranged by Base Video Production which was founded by Andy Dingley and Warren Evans and is based in Rufford Road.

But it was announced this week that though the difficulties could all be overcome, this was not possible in the current timescale.

Keyboard wizard Rick Wakeman, formerly of Yes, was performing



Artist Maria Rud was due to create projected images live to music

A statement says: "So the decision was made to actively look for a new date in 2018 in order to ensure this very special and unique event achieves everything it should.

"Potential dates in 2018 are already being considered and as soon as a firm date is set then further announcements will be made."

The show was organised in aid of wildlife charity Animals Asia, which campaigns to end the bear bile trade.

More than 10,000 moon bears or Asiatic black bears are caged on bile farms in China, according to Animals Asia figures.

Animals Asia has rescued over 600 bears, caring for them at its award-winning bear sanctuaries in China and Vietnam. The 'moon bears' are kept on farms where they are locked up in cages for years with bile extracted from their gallbladder daily. The bile is used for medical reasons such as the treatment of rheumatism.

Tickets were sold at £32 for standard or £84 VIP. Anyone who has bought tickets will be contacted for a refund or reallocation to the rearranged show.

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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, November 2, 2017

Working through lunch can cost £33K

IN the fast paced modern workplace, it can be hard to get a moment to catch your breath. However, new research shows that Brits all over the UK are sacrificing their lunch break to spend a greater proportion of their working day chained to their workspace.

It is nothing new that the true value of a proper lunch break and the positive impact it can have on workers is lost on some employers. However, it seems that under the pressure of a never-ending workload and in the race to get ahead, more and more Brits are themselves choosing to sacrifice lunch altogether.

Research unveiled today by leading job board totaljobs, who surveyed 7,135 workers across the UK, has highlighted that over half of Brits (56%) do not take their full lunch break.

While the average lunch break designated to workers is 40 minutes, the average time taken each day by the average UK employee is only 27. Over the course of a career, Brits are losing £33,264 in earnings for the work they do during unpaid lunch breaks, amounting to 1.6 times the average UK annual salary.

The research indicates that many workers fail to take proper lunch breaks as a result of their mind-set and the culture that has been created, as opposed to a company policy dictated by senior management.

Though 65% said they were actively encouraged to take a proper lunch break, only 33% of these workers said they did. The remaining 32% found themselves too busy to take a lunch break and often skipped it altogether. However, the research also revealed that 1 in 5 workers were not aware of legislation around lunch breaks. This suggests that many workers don't know their rights around taking a break, and employers have a duty to ensure workers are not only encouraged, but also informed around their lunch break.

Workload and pressures dominate the thoughts of workers across the country, with 68% saying they simply had too much work to do or last minute unexpected tasks dropped on them to justify taking a full lunch break.

Shockingly, over a quarter (27%) skip lunch altogether between two and four times a week. Though employers legally have to designate time for lunch and allocated breaks and many companies are actively encouraging workers to use it, employees still clearly feel they have not earned their break due to their volume of work. This will naturally cause a knock on effect to the rest of their working day, with 37% of women and 26% of men stating they felt stressed when they have had to skip lunch.

There is also a clear difference in industrial perceptions of a lunch break. While over half (59%) of those in the manufacturing industry were likely to use their lunch break in full, only 31% of those in the banking used their allotted time for lunch. Nearly a quarter (24%) of those in the catering industry always worked during their lunch break. Famed for its culture of entertaining and socialising, only 6% of employees in the media industry said that they regularly work through their lunch break.

Smokers have long been criticised for taking breaks during working hours. One in five (21%) smokers stated that they took cigarette breaks daily, with the average smoker nipping outside three times a day to soothe their craving. Nearly a third (32%) of employees said they had an issue with colleagues taking regular cigarette breaks, showing the issue is still a bone of contention even 10 years after the smoking ban came into force.

However, many employees view their smoking breaks as an alternative to the traditional lunch break, and as an opportunity to escape their workplace. The research revealed one in four UK employees don't have a staff room or canteen.

Alcohol is also playing an increasing role in the lunchtime habits of UK workers. The research found that the average UK worker drank six units of alcohol per week during their lunch breaks, which was likely to be drunk in one sitting. Rather than adopting Continental habits, the research suggests that the drinkers in the UK workforce are keen to spend Friday lunchtimes in the pub to make up for the lunch breaks they have missed earlier in the week.

A shocking 68% of all UK workers said that they NEVER meet friends or family for lunch during the working week.

Sidekick –Greg as Ken in Cuckoo

Dan the man – Greg Davies in Man Down

Greg: I'll get to grips with adulthood in Man Down

By Lisa Williams

SINCE swapping the classroom for the stage over a decade ago, former teacher Greg Davies' comedy career has gone from strength to strength. Now on a path that he loves, he tells Weekend how taking that leap of faith has transformed him into a 'far more bearable human being'.

Shropshire-born Greg Davies is, entirely by his own admission, an 'intrinsically lazy man'.

"I'd love to sit back – it's that thing (where) I don't have a choice," he cries, in reference to his hectic workload. "I'm very lucky that I've got these things to do, so I do them and I love them, but given the choice I honestly wouldn't get off my sofa.

"I am an absolute nightmare," he concludes, shaking his head. "Awful!"

The teacher-turned-stand-up comedian has good reason to remain vertical, however, for this autumn alone he has embarked on his biggest ever live tour, You Magnificent Beast; returned to his throne for a fifth series of the brilliant Taskmaster; and is once again starring in his self-penned midlife crisis sitcom, Man Down.

Having enjoyed such success with the Channel 4 hit Man Down, he assures me he feels 'more relaxed than I ever have' awaiting the fourth series' reception.

"Normally I'm just absolutely bricking myself, but this time I'm really sure if you like Man Down, you'll like this," says Greg, 49. "I could be wrong, but it's in a similar vein and if anything, we've pushed the levels of madness.

"I'm not saying (this one) wasn't hard work," he quickly adds. "The writing process is sickening and stressful and I hate it, but I have seen this series back and I'm really pleased with it."

Hapless hero – Greg's character Dan is down on his luck in Man Down on Channel 4 on Wednesday nights at 10pm

Desperate

Having 'found its groove', fans can expect another frenetic dose of disaster as child-trapped-in-a-man's-body Dan (Greg) is blinkered by unrealistic hopes for his impending fatherhood. He's quit his much-hated job as a teacher and, looking for a fresh start, is on an increasingly desperate hunt to find a new home for his soon-to-be family.

Add aggressive geese, desperate attempts to fit in at Dads' Club and the pressure of a christening to the mix and, as expected, there's little that doesn't conspire to keep this Man Down.

"I think he's just everyone's loser, isn't he?" Greg says. "For me I've taken actual weak aspects of my own character and put them in him – only we don't give him any of the coping strategies."

Grinning, he follows: "I am of the belief that we're all winging it – none of us know how to do life, really. Some of us are pretending we do, but with Dan it's fun to see someone who is openly winging it and hasn't been given the strategies to even disguise his folly or to learn.

"But I love that he never learns," he continues. "I love that he is so self-involved; we've taken the ugly aspects of human nature and put them in a bloke, but the redeeming thing we give him is he's relatively loyal and he is a trier," he reasons. "And I think people love a trier." More crucial than the relatable characters, even, is the show's ability to have its audience in hysterics.

"The cloud above everything is, 'Is it funny? Is it going to make people laugh?'" explains Greg, who is the first to admit he struggles to keep it together on set.

"One of the mild frustrations I feel is when Man Down is described as 'slapstick'," he states. "We work hard to surprise people in the show and we don't want people to guess where something is going to go. I think that's when we're at our best, when something happens that no one was expecting."

Is the 'torturous' writing process worth it, then? "It's always worth it. It is, I suppose, my equivalent of having a baby. . ." he suggests, laughing wildly, before quickly adding: "I don't want to compare it to having a baby. I take that back!

"But you forget the pain, (and) that's what people I know who've had babies say," he elaborates.

"As soon as we start filming, I forget the pain.

"It's just putting the ideas together," he muses, confessing he has no system other than sitting together in a room with 'funny' co-writers. "You can have ideas and we've got characters that we love now and we know how they're going to react to things, but it's getting those ideas to sit together that's the challenge."

'Birthing' a sitcom is, however, understandably a far cry from Greg's teaching days: a stretch that has inspired much of his comedy since he left the profession over a decade ago.

"I'd always wanted to do comedy, so teaching –although I had great times doing it – was always a bit of an avoidance strategy, if I'm honest," confides the star, who famously played psychotic head of sixth form Mr Gilbert in The Inbetweeners.

"I got to the stage where I was so miserable, that it wasn't fair for me to carry on," he confesses. "So (giving comedy a go) was necessity – but it often is with me. I'm often driven by necessity, rather than actually doing things like an adult.

"I'm very like Dan in that regard – in that it takes me to be forced into a corner, before I do something. And I felt I had no choice but to try comedy." A refreshing example of a talent who is as funny off stage as on it, Greg – who was born in Wales but grew up in Shropshire – made a clever move.

Aside from an impressive roster of TV gigs (including anything from panel shows such as Mock The Week and Never Mind The Buzzcocks to his Bafta-nominated performance in BBC Three's Cuckoo), the 6ft 8in comic is selling out stand-up shows country-wide.

He's currently on the road for the aforementioned You Magnificent Beast – and he couldn't be happier.

"I love it and I don't understand why I ever hear a comedian complain about it," Greg says of touring. "It's a mystery to me. It's wonderful.

"It appeals to my personality, stand-up, because it's instant gratification."

Simple steps homeowners can take now to protect their assets

Head of April King Legal Paul King explains why some homeowners are doing too little, too late to protect their hard-earned assets.

Paul King, Head of April King Legal

1. Care Cost Fees

A lot of people are still unaware that if they need care in later life, their assets will be means-tested by the local authority to help pay for these services. This goes back to the Community Care Act 1990, which came into force in 1993.

If someone requires social care in later life, the local authority will look to use the assets of a person until they get down to a lower limit of £14,250, when the local authority will take over the fees.

Paul knows this all too well, after experiencing this personally. *"My own grandmother sadly passed away recently at the age of 92. My grandfather had died many years earlier and left everything to her.*

When she needed care in the last six years of her life, because my grandfather had left everything to her, the house and all the estate were counted in the local authority's means test.

Our clients tell us, 'We've worked hard all our lives, why should the local authority get it all?'

Just as she died, she had gone down to that lower limit of £14,250 – and that's all that her children inherited."

There are many myths about the steps people can take to protect their assets from being used like this. The main one is that a parent should simply sign their house over to the children now, so it won't be taken into consideration for means testing. That's just not true.

Local authorities will actually look to see if you've 'deliberately deprived' yourself of an asset by giving property away, going back over any period in time.

Sometimes people think if the gift is made seven years prior then the house is safe.

This is not so as the seven-year rule only applies to Inheritance Tax and not local authority care.

The solution is for couples to simply not leave everything to each other in the first place.

Paul continues: *"What my grandfather could have done is leave his half of the house in trust to his children, stating that they couldn't have it while his wife, my grandmother, was still alive. We call these Property Trust Wills.*

If my grandfather had left his half of the house in trust to the children then when my grandmother subsequently received care in her later life she would have only been means tested on her own half of the house, but my grandfather's half would have been safe.

Why should he have to contribute his half when he didn't receive any care?

The important factor is that couples need to act in advance. Once one party dies or loses mental capacity, through a stroke for example, they are no longer in a position to do this legitimate and straightforward type of planning.

It is therefore important for couples to act now even if they may not foresee care fees being an issue."

Paul goes on to explain a further important point. Most clients he sees are surprised to learn that remarriage usually cancels a will and makes the new spouse next in line to inherit, ahead of their own children!

Protecting your half of the house in this way, he suggests, ensures that your children ultimately inherit when the survivor dies.

"Had my grandmother remarried after the death of my grandfather the whole estate could have passed sideways out of the family," says Paul.

It's another important reason for home-owning couples to upgrade to a Property Trust Will.

2. Bloodline Trust Wills

The majority of April King's clients have already made standard "mirror wills" with other firms before approaching the firm. A mirror will is when a couple leave everything to each other on the first death, then to the children when the second partner dies. But modern family life means these type of wills leave a lot to chance.

Explains Paul: *"If I have a mirror will leaving everything to my wife and she remarries or goes into care after my death then either the new husband or the local authority are likely to inherit most, if not all, of my estate ahead of my children.*

Even if my children are named in my mirror will it is by no means certain that they will inherit anything.

Once again, this is because a remarriage would cancel the will my wife had previously made with me and make the new husband next-of-kin. This often comes as a big shock to my clients who had perhaps thought that all was in order and that the family bloodline would one day inherit.

The same is true for thinking that their children and/or grandchildren will one day benefit under a mirror will. If any of your children should die leaving everything to their husband or wife and that son-in-law or daughter-in-law should then remarry, then your grandchildren would be the ones to lose out under the line of inheritance.

Worse still, someone else's grandchildren would be in line to receive the benefit of all your years of hard work!

I've experienced this in my own family and I'm sure most people have had similar experiences or heard of someone who has. Bloodline trusts will give greater protection to your children."

Paul continues: *"These things can be avoided by having a bloodline trusts will. Under these types of wills your children have complete control and access to the inheritance they receive from you but give added protection from the twists and turns of modern family life. The wording in these wills states that any money left over on their demise must pass to any children born of them – your grandchildren."*

3. Lasting Power of Attorney

Paul explains how people often get confused thinking that, because they have made a will, their executors can also deal with assets if there is illness, stroke or some other form of incapacity while they are still alive.

"Everyone should actually have two documents – a will that deals with their estate on death, and a lasting power of attorney that deals with their estate during their lifetime," he says.

The lasting power of attorney is a relatively new introduction and is divided into two parts – one deals with finance, the other deals with health and welfare. In many ways it's similar to a passport; a document that's registered now and one which can be physically handed to the attorneys should the need arise. It allows the attorneys, perhaps the children, to deal with banks and pension companies etc should their parent become incapacitated, but also to deal with matters such as where the parent should be living and how they receive care. Your attorneys, again perhaps your children, must legally act in your best interests at all times. You can choose a number of attorneys to act, either jointly or independently, and April King advises on the various options available.

Couples are often surprised to discover that even joint bank accounts can be frozen until the bank sees sight of a lasting power of attorney document

Having a lasting power of attorney removes the burden on children should ill-health happen further down the line. It helps a family deal with bank accounts and so on during a parent's lifetime and ceases on death. Crucially, you have to complete a lasting power of attorney while they are still in good mental health.

If someone becomes ill through say, a stroke or dementia, this option is lost and the family would have to apply for a order from the Court of Protection – a drawn out and expensive process. It is therefore a good idea for clients to plan ahead and remove any future burden from the family.

Once again, all adults should be thinking of this, particularly where there are children or a business involved. It's not just something to think about when you get older, that's the challenge for us.

People think 'I'm not ill, why do I need to make a power of attorney?'

But they're missing the point. This is a document that has to be done in advance. Paul adds: *"The next part is to appoint the attorneys, your children. Don't forget, your children can be the executors of your will and attorneys as well. The lasting power of attorney remains in place until you die unless you want to cancel it. Once it's registered, you don't have to worry if you then develop some debilitating illness. A burden has been removed from the family at an already difficult time."*

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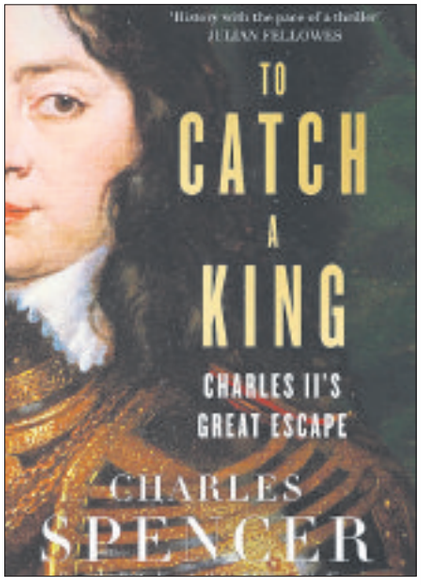
A vintage picture of Moseley Old Hall, now managed by the National Trust

Roundheads put a bounty on the king's head

The young Charles Stuart, later restored as Charles II



The new book by Charles Spencer about the king's escape

An old picture of Boscobel House, now managed by English Heritage

The tree at Boscobel said to be where the king hid

Thomas Whitgreave, owner of Moseley Hall

The great escape of a fugitive king

WE don't think of the English as particularly rebellious or revolutionary but we killed our king and declared a republic long before the French.

It's just that we changed our minds after a decade of po-faced Puritans and dictator Oliver Cromwell.

King Charles I lost his head in 1649 and his eldest son would have followed him to the block two years later if it wasn't for some brave and resourceful West Midlands folk. Historian and aristocrat Charles Spencer (the Earl, brother of Princess Diana) looks at the young Charles II's desperate escape after the bloody battle of Worcester finally ended the Civil Wars in Parliament's favour.

Catholic

This saw the king and small band of supporters roving across our region, depending on local Catholic families to hide him from the Roundhead search parties.

This included the famous day spent hiding in an oak tree at Boscobel House (hence all those pubs called the Royal Oak) and crammed into a hiding hole at Moseley Old Hall, near Wolverhampton.

In what was becoming the Black Country, with the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, Charles Stuart and his Royalist officers face a night time ride through Stourbridge, where Roundhead troops are based, speaking French so the locals think them immigrant Huguenot glassmakers, as the French Protestant craftsmen are common in the town.

The future 'Merry Monarch' also has banter with a Rowley Regis blacksmith who tells the disguised monarch what a rogue the king is. Luckily for him the king sees the funny side.

Spencer's book zips along with the speed of a thriller as it reveals a fascinating episode of British history which largely took place on our doorsteps.

Kinver, Pattingham, Madeley and Newport also get a mention, as does Wolverhampton where the king's sympathisers learn about Parliament's search for the king. They placed a bounty of £1,000 on his head, in those days a fortune, the equivalent to a lifetime's wages.

Charles emerges as a complex character, a highly self-entitled young man and a womaniser, sometimes self-pitying and sometimes heroic with a sense of humour and apparently a good mimic of the Midlands accent. The real heroes are the Whitgreave, Giffard and Penderel families, and other Catholics, who risked their lives to save the king, paving the way for his return to the throne a decade later.

To Catch A King by Charles Spencer is published in hardback by William Collins, £20.

LEON BURAKOWSKI

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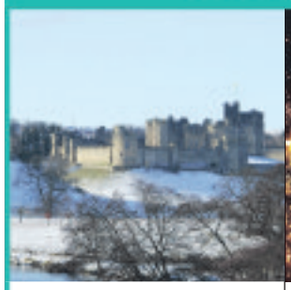

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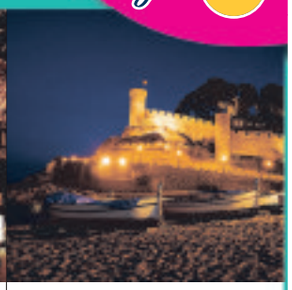

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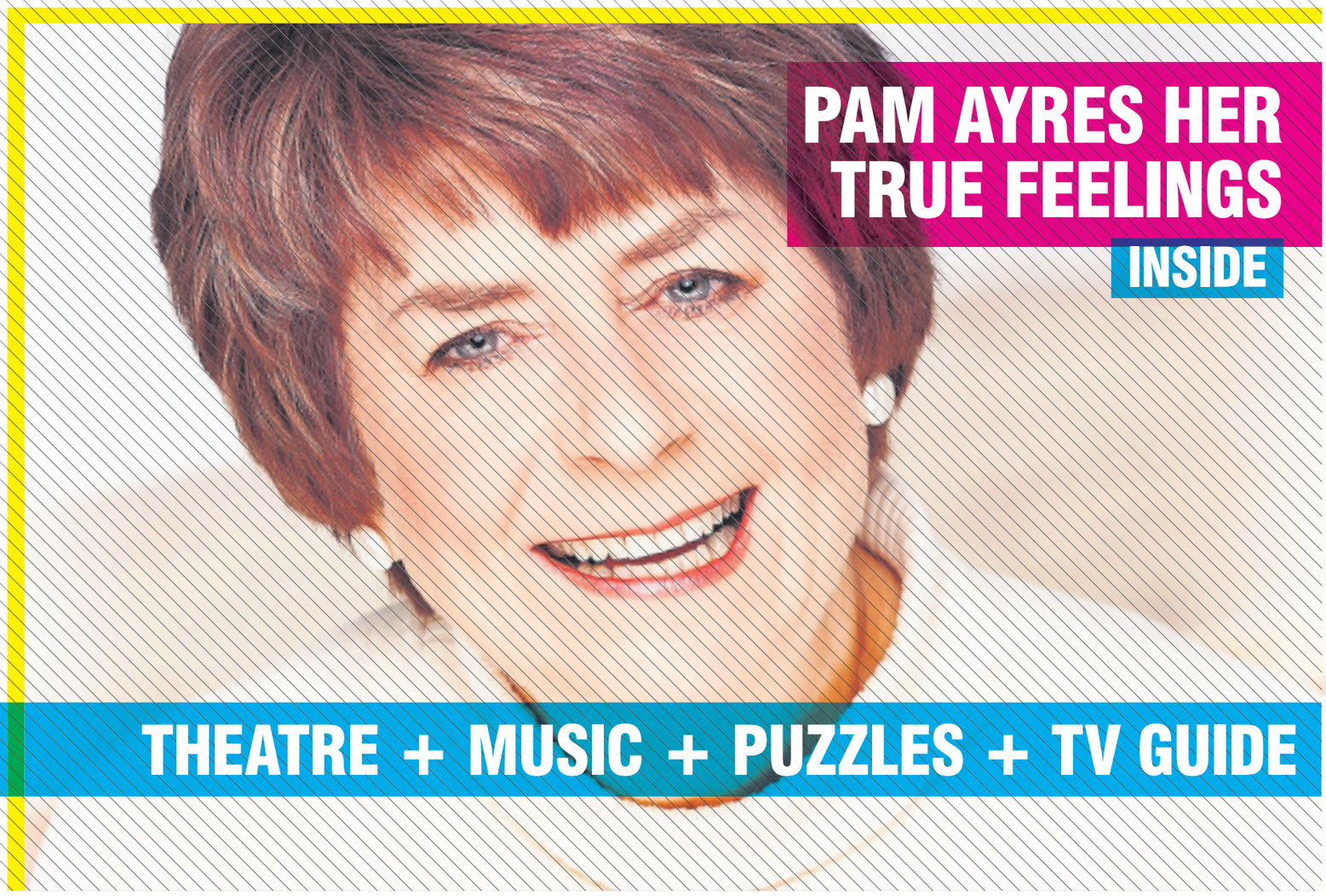

PAM AYRES HER TRUE FEELINGS

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Pam: My show's not just for old folk

Pam Ayres has been a writer, broadcaster, and entertainer for more than 40 years. She is one of the few authors who has had books in the Sunday Times bestseller charts in almost every decade since the 1970s. She is the author of several best-selling poetry collections, including The Works, With These Hands, Surgically Enhanced and You Made Me Late Again!.

And many of her poems are in school textbooks around the world including the UK, USA, China, Australia, New Zealand, Holland, South Africa, Ireland and Singapore.

In 2016, once again, the most borrowed poetry book in UK Libraries was Pam's most recent book, You Made Me Late Again. And this year she's back on the road with a new tour that reaches Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre on Saturday.

Pam is one of the most popular female comedians performing in UK theatres. Her autobiography, The Necessary Aptitude, was the UK's bestselling female autobiography of 2011, and her 2013 book of poetry, You Made Me Late Again, went straight into the Sunday Times bestseller lists.

ROYAL

She has appeared three times for HM The Queen – at the Silver Jubilee Royal Variety Performance in 1977, at a Royal Gala Charity Reception at St James Palace in 1996, when Pam, as the only entertainer, performed part of her solo stage show, and finally at Sandringham Women's Institute in 2004, when the Queen attended in her capacity as President of the Sandringham WI.

Subsequently, she was honoured to be awarded the MBE in Queen's Birthday Honours of 2004.

She is presently performing in more than 30 theatre and festival shows and is delighted to be back.

"I hope it will be fun. I'm on stage for two hours and I'll be using poems and stories and anecdotes and jokes. You have to vary it as much as you possibly can. I'll use old and new poems – things like I Wish I'd Looked After My Teeth.

"I'll use sad pieces too. We moved house after 28 years, which just about broke my heart, and I realise that's a commonly-shared feeling. There's also a piece about when children go to uni and the great gulf that leaves in your life.

"It's new and old. I always try and move it on all the time. I don't go round doing the same thing. I keep a very careful record of what I've said in a particular theatre. I try to write new material all the time and I've had a good writing period last winter."

There's no surefire way to write a brilliant new poem. Pam has to wait until the muse strikes and surf those creative ways.

"The process is waiting and praying for a good idea. That's the crux of it. It's to get a good idea that will strike a chord with lots of other people. Those things aren't that easy to find.

"I've been writing about long distance flying recently, that's come together quite well. It's looking for a good idea, then I work on it in the mornings. I go in each morning and work on the ideas I've got. I try to approach the subject from all sorts of different angles.

"A lot of my time is spent groping for good ideas. When I find one, I'm delighted. I try and do something good with it. You have to find something people will identify with."

Pam's a predominantly older audience but social media has allowed her to connect with a new generation. She is on Twitter and is constantly surprised about the new young people who come along.

"I do little political tweets and a bit of sniping from the sidelines, that's brought in quite an interesting new audience.

A way with words – Pam's tour reaches the Grand on Saturday

"It's not a show aimed at the old. I get three generations."

She is proud that performance poetry is now mainstream and feels a sense of kinship with new stars.

"I look now at the number of performance poets that there are and I do feel that it's partly down to me. Because I don't know of anybody except Cyril Fletcher who was doing his odd odes, sitting in an armchair and doing a bit of verse, who opened up the doors to it.

FLATTERING

"There was no-one going around with funny poems, using those as the main thrust of the evening. Phill Jupitus said to me 'you are the reason I'm a performance poet'. I didn't set out to be a performance poet. I wrote those things and If I'd been musical I'd have made them into funny songs. But I couldn't do that and everybody fell about laughing when I spoke them and that was good enough. I do feel a lot of people came after me, which is flattering."

Touring is bliss and she finds herself playing in Gibraltar, Althorp and Dubai, among other places. "You finish in all these amazing spots that you'd never in 100 years go to unless you did it for a living.

"I don't like the travel because the roads are busier but I love talking to an audience is great. I'm not as scared as I was at the beginning. If you are successful on a talent show these days you are thrown to enormous audiences before you're ready. Well, I'm not new but I still love it."

The show's full of new and old. I try and move it on all the time

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

Paul Bradley and Jessie Wallace

Soap stars head cast in classic spine-chiller

Former EastEnders stars Paul Bradley and Jessie Wallace head the cast in Ira Levin's classic thriller Deathtrap at the New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, next week.

Directed by Adam Penford, it runs rom November 7 to 11.

BAFTA nominated actress Wallace, and Bradley, who is also well-known as Elliott Hope in Holby City, a role he played for 10 years, will be joined by Sam Phillips, Beverly Klein and Julien Ball.

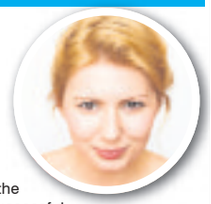
One of the most successful plays in its genre, Deathtrap centres on Sidney Bruhl (Bradley), a once successful writer of stage thrillers, who is in the grip of chronic writer's block. Out of the blue, young playwright Clifford Anderson (Phillips) sends Bruhl one of the only two copies of his brilliant new whodunnit, Deathtrap. Desperate to set Broadway alight once more, Bruhl spies his chance to invite Clifford to his remote country home, bringing the only other copy of Deathtrap with him.

If Bruhl can kill the newcomer and pass the play off as his own, he could once again be the toast of Broadway.

A spine-chiller guaranteed to keep the audience on their edge of their seats, Deathtrap continues to hold the record as the longest running thriller in Broadway history. It was subsequently made into a hit film starring Michael Caine and Christopher Reeve.

Call 0844 871 3011 or visit www.atgtickets.com/birmingham

Beautiful story of Carole's rise to fame



A TALENT show finalist has the beautiful role of Carole King in a musical about the songwriter's life. Beautiful – The Carole King Musical is being staged at the Birmingham Hippodrome next week.

It stars Bronté Barbé, pictured, a finalist in Andrew Lloyd Webber's BBC1 series Over The Rainbow in 2010. She has since appeared on stage in both London's West End and around the UK and was last seen locally at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre as Princess Fiona in Shrek – The Musical. She will be joined by Kane Oliver Parry as King's husband and songwriting partner Gerry Goffin, with Amy Ellen Richardson and Matthew Gonsalves as fellow songwriters Cynthia Weil, and Barry Mann. Life Without George star Carol Royle is King's mother Genie Klein and Adam Howden is publisher and producer Donnie Kirshner.

The Olivier, Tony and Grammy Award-winning West End and Broadway musical tells the inspiring true story of King's rise to stardom, from being part of a hit songwriting team with Goffin, to her relationship with Weil and Mann, to becoming one of the most successful solo acts in popular music history.

Along the way, she wrote the best-selling album Tapestry, which featured the likes of (You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman and You've Got a Friend.

Other classics include It Might as Well Rain Until September and The Locomotion.

Showtimes are at 7.30pm, Tuesday to Saturday, with matinees on Wednesday and Thursday at 2pm and on Saturday at 2.30pm. Tickets are from £18. See bookings. birminghamhippodrome.com

Top acts appear in hair-raising festival

Big names appear in Wolverhampton as part of a comedy festival that will see more than 120 events staged across the city. Jimmy Carr is at the Civic tomorrow (Friday), prankster Lee Nelson is at the Wulfrun on the same night and the wacky Milton Jones, pictured, at the Civic the following night.

In Birmingham, Joe Brown is at Town Hall on Saturday, the same night Jamiroquai play at the Arena. ABC/Kid Creole perform at the Symphony Hall on Monday.

Strictly legal – and one Elle of a musical

EastEnders' Rita Simons, UK Eurovision entrant and former Coronation Street and Emmerdale actor Bill Ward star in a major new UK tour of Legally Blonde – The Musical, which runs at the Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton next week.

Centring on Elle Woods, who heads to Harvard Law School after her boyfriend dumps her for someone more serious, it runs from November 7 to 11.

Press & PR manager Scott Bird said: "This is a hugely exciting cast to be presenting Legally Blonde The Musical at the Grand Theatre in the first professional production of the show to play here."

Showtimes are Tuesday-Thursday 7.30pm, Friday at 5pm and 8.30pm and Saturday at 2.30 and 7.30pm. For tickets from £19.50, with a £3 booking fee, call 01902 429212 or visit grandtheatre.co.uk

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Express & Star

SATURDAY'S TV NOVEMBER 4

CHOICE

Scott Bakula and Lucas Black

NCIS: New Orleans (Channel 5, 10pm)
New series. The naval crime drama spin-off returns, picking up with Pride and his team in the wake of the departure of Meredith Brody, who left for good after a close call with a terrorist. Concerns are raised about whether the unit has been irreparably compromised, and FBI special agent Tammy Gregorio is assigned to discover the truth. However, the agents are quickly given a chance to prove their effectiveness, as they co-ordinate with various other federal agencies to track down a sniper targeting special events across New Orleans. Starring Scott Bakula, Lucas Black, Vanessa Ferlito, Rob Kerkovich, Daryl Mitchell, Shalita Grant, CCH Pounder, Derek Webster, Doris Morgado, Jared Day and Steven Weber.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Hairy Bikers' Comfort Food. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Rugby League World Cup. **2.45 Film:** Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted. (2012) Animated comedy, with the voice of Ben Stiller. **4.10** Final Score. **5.10** Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme. **5.40** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 Pointless Celebrities. Lucy Porter, Rob Deering, Rachel and Stanley Johnson, John Shuttleworth, Dave Gorman, Carol McGiffin and Charlotte Crosby all take part in the unorthodox quiz show.

6.50 Strictly Come Dancing. The pressure for the pro-celebrity couples remains as high as ever, as the competition enters its seventh weekend. The 10 remaining duos once again take to the dance-floor to demonstrate whether another week of rigorous training has improved their footwork, while judges Shirley Ballas, Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcey Bussell assess their performance. Each star will be hoping to claim a high score from the adjudicators, placing them in a better position to avoid facing a dreaded elimination dance-off following the public vote.

8.20 Casualty. New junior doctor Rash faces nightmare first day in the ED, and Lily must listen to either her head or her heart as she decides whether to take a research position in Hong Kong.

9.10 Gunpowder. Catesby and his gang load the tunnels below Parliament with gunpowder, but across the city, Father Garnet faces pressure to betray them to the authorities. Last in the series.

10.10 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including West Ham United v Liverpool.

11.50 The NFL Show. Mark Chapman is joined by former players Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell to present highlights of Thursday night's game, plus a look at the major stories shaping the NFL.

12.20 Film: The Double. (2011) **1.55** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.00** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 How We Won the War. (R) **6.45** Animal Park Summer Special. (R) **7.30** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. **8.00** Deadly 60. (R) **8.30** Live Rugby League World Cup. **11.30** Coast. (R) **12.00** Rick Stein's Long Weekends. (R) **1.00** Nigella: At My Table. (R) **1.30** Natural World. (R) **2.30** Escape to the Continent. (R) **3.30** Italy Unpacked. (R) **4.30** Mastermind. (R) **5.00** Flog It! (R)

6.00 The Big Family Cooking Showdown. The three most successful families return for the final, in which they prepare food for a big family get-together, including nibbles, main courses and desserts. Last in the series. (R)

7.00 Britain Afloat. Mary-Ann Ochota reveals how a recreational sport developed by fisherman working on the Mersey led to the creation of pleasure sailing, and the formation of exclusive sailing clubs.

7.30 Front Row. Giles Coren presents an Agatha Christie-themed edition of the cultural review show, featuring an interview with Murder on the Orient Express director and star Kenneth Branagh.

8.00 Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands. Paul Murton journeys around the coast of the Long Island of Harris and Lewis, beginning on Scarp, travelling north to Great Bernera, then south east to Scalpay. (R)

8.30 Dad's Army. The older members of the platoon take drastic action when they are threatened with being made air-raid wardens, transforming themselves in a bid to appear younger. (R)

9.00 Josh Widdicombe: What Do I Do Now. A recorded performance of the comedian's show at the Hammersmith Apollo, in which he vents his frustration at everything from an overflowing shower to his contactless debit card.

10.00 QI XL. With Aisling Bea, Joe Lycett and David Mitchell.

10.45 Later – with Jools Holland. Last in the series.

11.50 Film: Red Tails. (2012) Black US fighter pilots battle both the German air force and racism in their own ranks. Fact-based Second World War drama, starring Terrence Howard.

1.45 Film: Love. (2011) **3.05** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Fangbone. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Saturday Morning with James Martin. **11.25** Gino's Italian Coastal Escape. (R) **11.55** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **12.50** The Harbour. (R) **1.20** ITV News; Weather. **1.30** The X Factor Live. (R) **3.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **3.55 Film:** Father of the Bride. (1991)

6.00 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs. Paul meets a pair of old labradors who cannot bear to be apart for one second and a tiny puppy with an anti-social behaviour problem. (R)

6.25 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.35 ITV News; Weather.

6.50 New You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates another selection of hilarious home videos, including a toddler's explosive encounter with a cake, and a pole-dancer's disaster in a kitchen.

7.15 Ninja Warrior UK. Competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage in this obstacle-course challenge, hosted by Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara. (R)

8.20 The X Factor Live. Dermot O'Leary hosts as the nerve-jangling live stage of the talent contest continues, and the remaining acts step on-stage to face scrutiny at the hands of the judges.

10.05 The Jonathan Ross Show. Actress and director Jodie Foster, comedian and bestselling author David Walliams, and GameFace star Roisin Conaty join Jonathan for a chat, and Blondie perform in the studio.

11.10 ITV News; Weather.

11.25 Film: Forgetting Sarah Marshall. (2008) A jilted man takes a trip to Hawaii, only to find his ex and her new boyfriend are staying at the same resort. Romantic comedy, with Jason Segel and Kristen Bell.

1.20 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.25 Adventure Racing: Spartan Race Europe. **6.50** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.15** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.45** Frasier. (R) **8.10** Frasier. (R) **8.35** The Big Bang Theory. **9.00** The Big Bang Theory. **9.30** The Big Bang Theory. **9.55** The Simpsons. (R) **10.20** The Simpsons. (R) **10.50** The Simpsons. (R) **11.20** The Simpsons. (R) **11.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.20** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.25** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R) **4.30** Best Laid Plans. **5.30** Location, Location, Location. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Volatile Earth: Killer Volcanoes. New series. The first of three documentaries in which scientists who are experts in the field of natural disasters identify the most extreme catastrophes to have ever occurred on Earth, piecing together the stories of these events via the debris left in their wake.

8.00 Pearl Harbour: The New Evidence. Documentary shedding light on whether there is any truth to conspiracy theorists' suggestions that London and Washington had been aware the Japanese were planning to assault the American naval base at Pearl Harbour in 1941, but refused to act on the intelligence as part of a plot to bring the full might of America's military into the Second World War. In the wake of the attack, an investigation into how US forces failed to anticipate the assault concluded that Admiral Husband Kimmel, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, had been guilty of dereliction of duty, a charge that left his career in tatters. (R)

9.00 Film: The Other Woman. (2014) A woman is devastated to learn her boyfriend is actually married, but when she meets his wife, they quickly become friends. When they discover he has a third secret lover, they decide to join forces and teach him a lesson. Comedy, starring Cameron Diaz.

11.10 Film: Unknown. (2011) Thriller, starring Liam Neeson.

1.15 The Last Leg SU2C Special. (R) **2.10** Hollyoaks. **4.20** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.15** Kirstie's Vintage Home. (R) **5.35** Draw It! (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.15** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **9.50** The Gadget Show. (R) **10.45** Police Interceptors. (R) **11.45 Film:** The 12 Gifts of Christmas. (2015) Comedy, starring Katrina Law. **1.25 Film:** The Christmas Card. (2006) Romantic drama, with John Newton and Alice Evans. **3.10 Film:** Christmas in the City. (2013) Drama, starring Ashley Williams. **4.10** 5 News Update. **4.15 Film:** Christmas in the City. (2013) Concluded. **5.00 Film:** A Mission for Christmas. (2015) Premiere. Christmas drama, starring Lindsey Gort.

6.00 5 News Update.

6.05 Film: A Mission for Christmas. (2015) Concluded.

6.45 Film: Rio Lobo. (1970) A former Union Army colonel heads for Texas to recover a shipment of gold bullion stolen from a payroll train during the American Civil War and settle a few old scores along the way. Howard Hawks' Western, starring John Wayne, Jorge Rivero, Christopher Mitchum, Jack Elam, Jennifer O'Neill and Mike Henry.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games, including Bristol City v Cardiff City at Ashton Gate, Brentford v Leeds United at Griffin Park, and Aston Villa v Sheffield Wednesday at Villa Park.

10.00 NCIS: New Orleans. New series. The naval crime drama spin-off returns, as Pride and company co-ordinate with other federal agencies to track down a sniper targeting special events across New Orleans.

10.55 NCIS: New Orleans. The FBI gets involved in an investigation into the murder of a US Navy officer, in which Pride's friend Elvis Bertrand, a US Navy intelligence analyst, is the prime suspect.

11.50 Lip Sync Battle UK. Melanie Brown and Professor Green present the musical game show as actor Danny Dyer and dancer Craig Revel Horwood go head to head lip-synching to a hit song. (R)

12.15 SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.10** The Yorkshire Vet. Peter Wright attends to a feisty Highland cow. (R) **4.00** Ben Fogle: New Lives in the Wild. (R) **4.50** Great Scientists. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.40** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 The Inca: Masters of the Clouds **8.00** Gunpowder 5/11: The Greatest Terror Plot **9.00** I Know Who You Are **11.35** The Vietnam War **12.30** Top of the Pops: 1984 **1.55** Sound of Cinema: The Music That Made the Movies **2.55** The Inca: Masters of the Clouds **3.55** Close

ITV2
12.20 Take Me Out **1.30** Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule **2.00 Film:** See Spot Run (2001) **3.00** FYI Daily **3.05 Film:** See Spot Run (2001) **4.05 Film:** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10 Film:** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **6.10 Film:** The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003) **7.15** FYI Daily **7.20 Film:** The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003) **10.00** Celebrity Juice **10.50** Family Guy **11.50** American Dad! **12.50** Timewasters **1.20** Bromans **2.20** Viral Tap **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3
11.05 Film: Rest in Peace, Mrs Columbo (1990) **1.05** Foyle's War **3.10** Midsomer Murders **11.00** The Syndicate **12.05** Foyle's War **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.25 Shed and Buried **1.30** ITV Racing Live from Ascot and Wetherby. Coverage of today's race meetings at Ascot and Wetherby. **4.00** Pawn Stars **4.55** Hornblower **7.00** Live World Series of Darts Finals. Coverage of day two from Glasgow. **11.00 Film:** The Glimmer Man (1996) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10 Film:** The Glimmer Man (1996) **12.50** The Sweeney **1.50** The Classic Car Show **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.30 Film: Toy Story OF TERROR! (2013) **12.00** How I Met Your Mother **1.00** The Goldbergs **3.00** Don't Tell the Bride **4.00** The Great British Bake Off: The Final **5.15** The Great British Bake Off: An Extra Slice **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Iron Man 2 (2010) The hero battles a vengeful new foe, but finds the armour he created to fight evil is killing him. Adventure, with Robert Downey Jr. **11.25** Gogglebox **1.30** Naked Attraction **2.35** Rude Tube **3.25** Tattoo Fixers **4.20** How I Met Your Mother **5.05** Black-ish

Film4
11.00 Bridge to Terabithia (2007) **1.00** Coneheads (1993) **2.40** Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules (2011) **4.45** Earthquake (1974) **7.10** Legend (1985) **9.00** 47 Ronin (2013) **11.15** The Transporter (2002) **1.00** Dog Soldiers (2002) **3.15** Close

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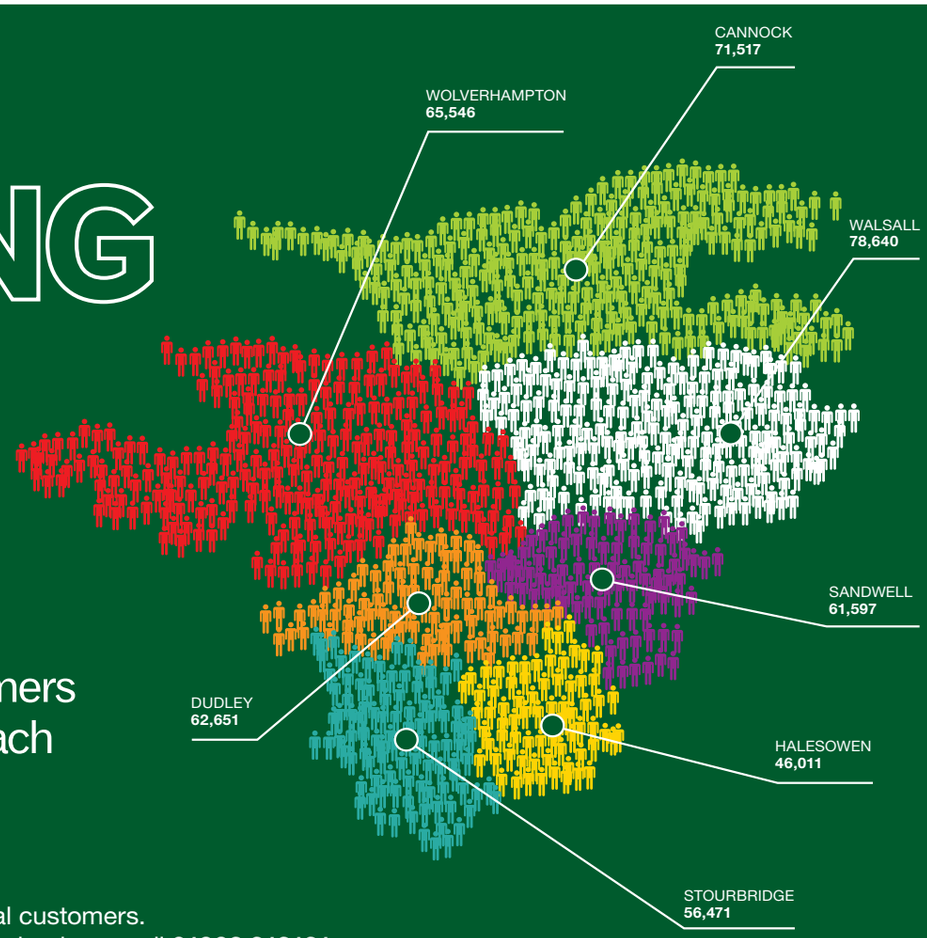

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SUNDAY'S TV NOVEMBER 5

CHOICE

Indira Varma

Unspeakable (Channel 4, 9pm)
One-off drama, starring Indira Varma as a mother who receives an anonymous text message warning her that her 11-year-old daughter is being abused by her new boyfriend, who has only just moved in with her. Unable to share her fears with anyone else, she succumbs to paranoia over the course of a weekend. Luke Treadaway, Neil Maskell, Kate Ashfield, Will Thorp, Nina Sorrentino, Lucas Bond, Jordan Whyte, Anil Desai, Sophie Brooke, Alison Garner, Ffion Jolly, Lucinda Holloway and Abigail Wisdom also star.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Points of View. **1.30** Lifeline. **1.45** FA Cup Final Score. **4.00** Songs of Praise. **4.35** Blue Planet II. (R) **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 Panorama. In-depth current affairs report.

6.30 Countryfile. Matt Baker reports on a new charter to protect Britain's woodlands and Ellie Harrison meets seal pups at Skomer in a special episode themed around Autumn.

7.15 Strictly Come Dancing – The Results. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman reveal the results of last night's show before another couple leave the contest. Featuring a musical performance from Stereophonics.

8.00 Blue Planet II. Creatures that live in volcanic hot spots on the ocean bed, areas that reach temperatures hot enough to melt lead and which may hold the secrets behind all life on Earth. Other strange creatures from the depths of the sea include bone-eating worms, fish that walk rather than swim, and hordes of squid. Plus, footage of sharks in a feeding frenzy over the dead body of a whale and the wildlife of the Midnight Zone in the Pacific, an area that never receives any natural light, forcing creatures to rely on their own bioluminescence.

9.00 The Last Post. Joe's future in the army hangs in the balance, as Honor struggles with the revelations about his past. Markham is torn between his duty and his conscience. Last in the series.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, including Chelsea v Manchester United a and Manchester City v Arsenal.

11.45 Ronny Chieng: International Student. New series. Sitcom starring the comedian as a Malaysian student who comes to an Australian university to study law. Ronnie enters a drinking contest to win access to a book.

12.15 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.20 BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 How We Won the War. (R) **6.35** A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.20** Great British Garden Revival. (R) **8.20** The Countryfile Ramble for Children in Need. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Mary Berry's Foolproof Cooking. (R) **11.30** My Life on a Plate. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Natural World – Echo: The Unforgettable Elephant. (R) **2.00** Wild Brazil. (R) **3.00** Flog It! (R) **4.00** Rugby League World Cup. **5.30** MOTD: FA Cup Highlights.

7.00 Top Gear. Matt LeBlanc drives an eight-wheeled rescue vehicle from Russia, Rory Reid turns the world's ugliest car into a luxury yacht, and Chris Harris reviews the new Porsche Cayman. Jamiroquai frontman Jay Kay is the studio guest. Last in the series. (R)

8.00 Robot Wars. Dara Ó Briain and Angela Scanlon present the third round, with robots Apex, Vulture, Terrorhurtz, Track-Tion, Bucky the Robot and Rapid battling it out. Among the contestants controlling the machines are a group of schoolchildren who are this series' youngest entrants and a team that has spent more money on their robot than any of their rivals.

9.00 Film: Louis Theroux: My Scientology Movie. (2015) Premiere. The reporter investigates the controversial religious organisation, but finds himself denied access to anyone involved. Adopting a different approach, he resorts to recruiting actors to re-enact the personal stories of former members – only to find his project is under surveillance by representatives of the church.

10.35 Snowfall. Franklin causes trouble by bringing his drunken father to Jerome and Louie's July 4 barbecue. Teddy and Alejandro crash land in the Mexican desert while flying back from Nicaragua.

11.20 Film: The Ring. (2002) A journalist investigates teenage deaths linked to a videotape, which is rumoured to cause the demise of anyone who watches it. Horror remake, with Naomi Watts and Martin Henderson.

1.05 Sign Zone: Question Time. David Dimbleby chairs the topical debate in Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire, where panellists include former Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale and the Stagecoach founder Brian Souter. (R) **2.05** Holby City. (R) **3.05** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ben 10. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Make It Pop. (R) **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Australian Wilderness with Ray Mears. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00 Film:** Rest in Peace, Mrs Columbo. (1990) **1.00** ITV News; Weather. **1.10** The X Factor Live. (R) **2.50** Catchphrase. (R) **3.35** Ball and Boe: Back Together. (R) **4.35** A Very Royal Wedding. (R) **5.50** Regional Programme ; Weather.

6.00 ITV News; Weather.

6.10 The Chase: Celebrity Special. Bradley Walsh presents as celebrity contestants Hannah Mills, Chris Ramsey, Dion Dublin and Lesley Garrett pit their wits against ruthless quiz genius the Chaser in the hope of winning a potential prize pot worth thousands of pounds. They must work as a team and play strategically to answer general knowledge questions against the clock and race down the game board to the exit without being caught.

7.05 The X Factor Live. Dermot O'Leary hosts the second of this weekend's two live shows, as the acts strive to ensure a place in next week's episodes – while judges Simon Cowell, Sharon Osbourne, Nicole Scherzinger and Louis Walsh will be hoping to ensure their favoured acts make it through to the next stage.

9.00 Sheridan. Sheridan Smith performs songs from her debut album as well as other favourite numbers, accompanied by a live orchestra. In between musical numbers, she chats to Alexander Armstrong about her career.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Peston on Sunday. (R)

11.15 Car Crash Britain: Caught on Camera. Documentary focusing on crashes, miracle escapes and bad driving, with stories including a daughter's tribute to her dad's life-saving driving skills. (R)

12.10 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Kevin Can Wait. **6.25** Kevin Can Wait. **6.50** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.15** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.40** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.05** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00** The Simpsons. (R) **3.30** The Great British Bake Off: The Final. (R) **4.45** Channel 4 News. **5.15 Film:** Paddington. (2014) Family comedy, starring Hugh Bonneville.

7.00 Escape. Five engineers are stranded in Arctic conditions and must assemble a vehicle to escape in from the wreckage of a snowmobile and a light aircraft. The team combines skills ranging from aircraft mechanics to vehicle engineering – but struggle to agree on exactly what they should be building. With Ant Middleton.

8.00 Great Canal Journeys. Timothy West and Prunella Scales explore the Marne-Rhine Canal in Alsace and Lorraine, close to France's border with Germany and running through forests, mountains and valleys. They get to grips with an unfamiliar system of locks, sample local wines, and pay a visit to the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

9.00 Unspeakable. One-off drama, starring Indira Varma as a mother who receives an anonymous text message warning her that her 11-year-old daughter is being abused by her new boyfriend, who has only just moved in with her. Unable to share her fears with anyone else, she succumbs to paranoia over the course of a weekend.

10.00 Gogglebox: Celebrity Special for SU2C. Critiques of popular and topical TV shows, featuring some well-known faces appearing in support of the Stand Up to Cancer initiative. (R)

11.00 Film: The Railway Man. (2013) The wife of a former prisoner of war tries to learn the truth about the traumatic events that haunt her husband. Fact-based drama, with Colin Firth and Nicole Kidman.

1.05 The Supervet. (R) **2.00** A Summer to Save My Life. (R) **2.55** Gillette World Sport. **3.20** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **3.45** Mobil 1 The Grid. (R) **4.15** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.10** Draw It! (R) **5.35** Countdown. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.35** Wissper. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.45** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **7.00** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.30** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.45** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.30** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.50** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.25** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.20** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud 3. (R) **11.45 Film:** A Husband for Christmas. (2016) **1.30 Film:** Coming Home for Christmas. (2013) Premiere. Drama, starring Carly and Britt McKillip. **3.10 Film:** Let It Snow. (2013) Premiere. Drama, starring Candace Cameron Bure. **4.10** 5 News Update. **4.15 Film:** Let It Snow. (2013) **4.55** 5 News Weekend. **5.00 Film:** Grease. (1978)

6.00 5 News Update.

6.05 Film: Grease. (1978) Concluded.

7.15 Grease: Before & After They Were Stars. The stories of the cast of Grease, from their careers before the movie to their lives afterwards.

8.15 Rugby on 5: Anglo Welsh Cup Highlights. Action from the matchday one pool fixtures in the domestic rugby union competition, which included Exeter Chiefs v Northampton Saints, Saracens v Harlequins and London Irish v Bath.

9.00 The Grease Story. The story behind the classic movie musical. The programme examines the original stage musical in the early 1970s, which starred a young Richard Gere, and at the changes that occurred between stage and screen, including the addition of several new songs and toning down the original show's darker elements.

10.30 Most Shocking Moments in Pop. A countdown of outrageous events and scandals from pop world, including Miley Cyrus's performance at 2013 VMAs and Britney Spears shaving her head. (R)

1.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** GPs: Behind Closed Doors. (R) **4.00** Inside Britain's Biggest Mosque. (R) **4.50** Great Artists. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.45** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00 Film:** October: 10 Days That Shook the World (1928) **9.40** Ceremony: Return of Friedrich Engels **10.40** The Space: Parade **11.10 Film:** Gulag (1985) **2.10** Russia – A Century of Suspicion: A Timewatch Guide **3.10** Close

ITV2
11.05 2Awesome: Third Wheel **11.25** The X Factor Live **1.10** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.45 Film:** Bean (1997) **2.50** FYI Daily **2.55 Film:** Bean (1997) **3.30 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **4.30** FYI Daily **4.35 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.20 Film:** Clash of the Titans (2010) **6.20** FYI Daily **6.25 Film:** Clash of the Titans (2010) **7.25 Film:** Pacific Rim (2013) **8.25** FYI Daily **8.30 Film:** Pacific Rim (2013) **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30** Release the Hounds: Halloween Special **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV3
12.55 Heidi **3.05 Film:** Carry On Follow That Camel (1967) **4.05** FYI Daily **4.10 Film:** Carry On Follow That Camel (1967) **5.00** Lewis **9.00** The Syndicate **10.05** Honest **11.10 Film:** The Constant Gardener (2005) **12.20** FYI Daily **12.25 Film:** The Constant Gardener (2005) **1.40** The Knock **2.35** Mr Selfridge **3.25** Wycliffe **5.15** Judge Judy **5.35** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
12.45 Live World Series of Darts Finals. Coverage of the quarter-finals from Glasgow. **5.00** Pawn Stars **6.50** Snooker v Darts **7.00** Live World Series of Darts Finals. Coverage of the semi-finals and final from Glasgow. **11.00 Film:** 6 Bullets (2012) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10 Film:** 6 Bullets (2012) **1.15** The Sweeney **2.15** Storage Wars **2.35** British Touring Cars – Crashes and Smashes **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 Made in Chelsea **12.00** Don't Tell the Bride **1.00** The Goldbergs **2.30** The Big Bang Theory **3.30 Film:** Johnny English Reborn (2011) **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Battle: Los Angeles (2011) **11.20** Naked Attraction **12.25** Tattoo Fixers **1.30** Rude Tube **2.35** First Dates **3.25** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 Vice Versa (1988) **1.00** Anna Karenina (2012) **3.45** Short Circuit 2 (1988) **6.05** The Hunger Games (2012) **9.00** American Ultra (2015) **10.50** Transporter 2 (2005) **12.30** Hitchcock (2012) **2.25** Black Rock (2012)

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Mommy, Channel 4, 1.50am
A widow decides to take her violent teenage son out of the institution that has been his home for the past three years. However, his behaviour begins to spiral out of control, and she is forced to turn to a mysterious new neighbour for help. Drama, starring Anne Dorval and Antoine-Olivier Pilon. (2014)

TUESDAY
I'm Not Ready for Christmas, Channel 5, 3.15pm
When a compulsive fibber's niece makes a wish to Santa Claus, her world is turned upside down when it comes true and she is rendered incapable of lying. As her career and love life are jeopardised by her newfound honesty, she must learn to judge between telling the truth and doing what is right. Festive comedy, starring Alicia Witt and George Stults. (2015)

WEDNESDAY
Easy Virtue, BBC2, 12pm
A naive Englishman in the 1920s embarks on a passionate romance with a glamorous and sophisticated American while in the south of France, resulting in a hasty wedding. Romantic comedy based on Noel Coward's play, starring Jessica Biel, Ben Barnes, Kristin Scott Thomas and Colin Firth. (2008)

On the Waterfront, Friday, BBC2, 12pm

THURSDAY
The Secret Life of Walter Mitty, BBC2, 12pm
A bumbling dreamer retreats into a fantasy world to escape grim reality, until an encounter with a mysterious woman sweeps him up into a real-life adventure. Comedy based on James Thurber's short story, starring Danny Kaye and Virginia Mayo. (1947)

FRIDAY
On the Waterfront, BBC2, 12pm
A former prizefighter is reduced to completing errands for the gangsters running the dockyard unions. When he witnesses his boss's thugs commit murder, he is willing to keep his mouth shut – until his conscience is pricked by an outspoken priest and the dead man's sister, who hope to persuade him to testify against the crooks. Elia Kazan's Oscar-winning drama, starring Marlon Brando, Lee J Cobb and Eva Marie Saint (1954)

PICK OF THE WEEK

Carol Vorderman pays tribute to inspiring people

The Pride of Britain Awards remind us of the courage which still exists in every corner of the land said Prince Charles – and with that simple statement, he sums up the purpose of this annual event.

The ceremony started life in 1999 with the express intention to celebrate acts of bravery and selflessness from people whose actions would otherwise go unsung; these are ordinary folk with extraordinary stories.

Unfortunately, we're living in troubled times, which means that more such acts seem to have occurred this year than ever before – no doubt those sitting on the panel that decides who receives the trophies in each category have faced a tough time trying to work it all out.

But what each winner and nominee has in common is the fact that they did what they did while expecting nothing for it in return. In fact, they would probably claim they simply carried out a deed that anybody else would have done had they been in the same position.

Those receiving nominations have had their names put forward by members of the public, with the likes of former winner Katie Piper, Good Morning hosts Susannah Reid and Ben Shephard, and Cressida Dick, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, sitting on a panel to decide who wins what – and there won't be a dry eye anywhere as the results are made public.

As for the famous faces taking part, well, there will be lots of them keen to show their appreciation.

We don't see that much of Carol Vorderman on the box these days, but she's hosted every Pride of Britain ceremony to date and she will be taking charge of this one too, which takes place at London's Grosvenor House.

Others set to participate include David Beckham, Simon Cowell, Michael Caine, Rod Stewart, Lenny Henry and Liam Payne, while politics will be represented by Prime Minister Theresa May and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn; scientist extraordinaire Stephen Hawking is also expected to feature.

"I'm always delighted to take part in the Pride of Britain Awards," says Beckham. "The winners are always amazing, particularly the children. I think the bravery and courage they show is an example to us all."

"I have been to some awards in my time, but never to an awards like this," adds Caine. "It is the most extraordinary thing."

"There's too much celebrity culture in this country," claims Henry. "Pride of Britain is great because it celebrates people who aren't part of that world."

Among those to look out for are the members of the emergency services and NHS who assisted those affected by the terror attacks in Manchester and London, as well as the Grenfell Tower disaster.

Other winners include a quick-thinking four-year-old who saved her mum's life and a hairdresser whose story has inspired domestic violence victims to fight back.

Ashley Banjo acts as a roving reporter, speaking to winners and celebrities backstage.

Carol Vorderman hosts The Pride of Britain Awards, Tuesday, ITV, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Nigella: At My Table
BBC2, 8.30pm
Nigella Lawson serves up five more easy-to-make dishes, recipes that combine the comfort of the familiar and the exuberance of the new, rustling up her favourite weekend breakfast special in the shape of waffles. She also prepares dishes perfect for laidback entertaining in beef and aubergine fatteh, accompanied by Bulgar wheat with flaked almonds and nigella seeds, followed by her passion fruit ice-cream cake. Late-night inspiration comes in the form of a toasted brie, Parma ham and fig sandwich.

TUESDAY
The A Word
BBC1, 9pm
Return of the drama about an autistic child and his family. Two years on, in the Lake District, seven-year-old Joe is growing up. He has started to notice he's different from other kids. And when he says the word 'autistic' out loud, seeing it as something bad, Alison and Paul know they must talk to their son. But how do they broach the A word with a child for whom language is already a struggle? And how do they respond to the news that Joe is struggling at school more than they thought? Drama, starring Morven Christie, Lee Ingleby and Christopher Eccleston.

Motherland
BBC2, 10pm
Any sitcom in which Graham Linehan is involved will always be worth a watch. But when you add into the mix his wife Helen, Sharon Horgan and Holly Walsh as co-writers, then it becomes a must. Although Motherhood is a far cry from his most famous project, Father Ted, it went down a treat with viewers and critics alike when the pilot episode aired as part of the BBC's landmark sitcoms season last year. Heading the cast is Anna Maxwell-Martin, who clearly enjoys ditching her usual deadly serious roles for something far more light-hearted. She plays stressed-out mum Julia who, in the opening episode, is forced out of her comfort zone when she makes the mistake of agreeing to host a children's party.

WEDNESDAY
Big Life Fix: Children in Need Special
BBC2, 9pm
Eight-year-old Josh from London has a rare condition that means he was born completely blind and is unable to use his school's playground. Ayala, also eight, has cerebral palsy which has severely restricted her movements and makes it difficult for her to play with her twin sister, while 10-year-old Aman was left with severe brain damage following a car accident that has affected her memory, leaving her struggling to remember the teacher's instructions. Now, Simon Reeve is following some of the UK's leading designers and engineers as they attempt to help these three remarkable children with bright ideas ranging from a tactile 'yellow brick road' to a programme that transcribes a teacher's spoken words into text.

Nigella: At My Table, Monday, BBC2, 8.30pm

THURSDAY
Sam Smith at the BBC
BBC1, 8pm
In the space of five short years, Sam Smith has gone from struggling singer and chorister to one of the world's biggest pop stars. Ever since he featured on Disclosure's breakthrough single Latch in 2012, Smith's rise to the top of the music tree has been phenomenal. Last week, he released his eagerly awaited second album, The Thrill of It All, the follow-up to his multi-platinum selling debut, In The Lonely Hour. To celebrate, Smith has recorded this hour-long entertainment show in which he is accompanied by his band and the BBC Concert Orchestra to perform old and new tracks in front of a live studio audience. Presented by Fearne Cotton, the programme will also feature an interview with the singer as he discusses his career, music, and his much talked-about private life.

FRIDAY
Live International Football
ITV, 7.30pm
England v Germany (Kick-off 8.00pm). Mark Pougatch presents all the action from the friendly at Wembley Stadium, as the hosts begin preparations for the World Cup against the holders. The sides last met seven months ago in a friendly in Dortmund, when Lukas Podolski's goal in his final international gave Germany a 1-0 win despite an encouraging performance by Gareth Southgate's men. Joachim Low's side also prevailed by the same scoreline when they nations last faced each other at this venue in 2013.

Express & Star READER OFFER
Letters from Father Christmas

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BRAIN GYM

No.454

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

12	14	11	23	2	7	■	3	13	23	2	8	11
■	25	■	15	■	2	■	13	■	7	■	■	1
■	7	■	15	5	23	4	14	23	2	14	18	20
16	14	24	9	■	4	■	2	■	14	■	■	22
■	17	■	23	■	1	■	26	■	10	■	■	14
■	8	23	5	9	25	8	18	■	8	23	26	9
17	■	14	■	■	■	12	■	■	■	6	■	18
19	13	20	18	■	16	1	13 U	2	25	9	21	■
1	■	■	20	■	13	■	25 N	■	1	■	9	■
5	■	■	1	■	25	■	14	■	1	25	5	21
9	6	10	1	5	14	23	8	9	7	■	5	■
2	■	■	8	■	1	■	9	■	5	■	9	■
23	13	8	19	1	2	■	7	2	9	23	7	18

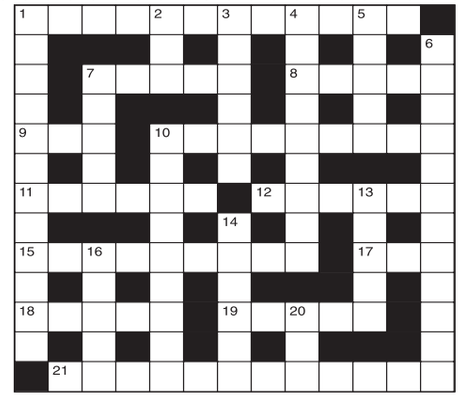
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25 N
13 U	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1 M	2 Y	3 O	4 U	5 Z	6 V	7 D	8 P	9 N	10 W	11 J	12 R	13 T
14 A	15 H	16 L	17 G	18 K	19 E	20 C	21 F	22 S	23 I	24 Q	25 X	26 B

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Demobbed and not working (3,2,7)
7. Took the part of another (5)
8. Risk having a dog at home (5)
9. America gets a point advantage (3)
10. Changed circumstances may put a different complexion on it (9)
11. Depart agitatedly, it may explode! (6)
12. A sign of twins (5)
15. They give actors difficulty - what a shame! (4,5)
17. Sounds like a shortage of resin (3)
18. Divert and employ after morning (5)
19. Key material for piano-makers (5)
21. Eminent composer? (6,2,4)

Down

1. What the crafty bounder kept? (3,4,5)
2. Had a meal in the cafe dining room (3)
3. Win, possibly earned (6)
4. Utterly incompetent (9)
5. Hiding place many yearn to find (5)
6. Open anger - by gum! (12)
7. These could be on the bed (5)
10. Waits for Noel (9)
13. Insert in song (5)
14. Officer found on the staff? (6)
16. Instigate quarrels we hear (5)
20. It just isn't on for cricketers (3)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Immediately (8,4)
7. Dilate (5)
8. Smarten (5)
9. Bind (3)
10. Multiply (9)
11. Choice (6)
12. Clear (6)
15. Uplifting (9)
17. Curve (3)
18. Sphere (5)
19. Harbour (5)
21. Avowal (12)

Down

1. Faults (12)
2. Wrath (3)
3. Empty (6)
4. Attractive (9)
5. Ring (5)
6. Ban (12)
7. Sugary (5)
10. Conspicuous (9)
13. Obvious (5)
14. Spectacles (6)
16. Animal track (5)
20. By way of (3)

Sudoku

	1		8				5	
		7		2		6		9
9		4		7		2		1
			2	8	1			
	2						3	
			4	3	5			8
8		1		4		5		3
		9	3			8		
	4				8		6	

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:

5	1	3	9	4	2	6	8	7
6	4	7	5	3	8	9	1	2
2	9	8	6	1	7	3	5	4
1	7	4	2	9	3	5	6	8
9	5	2	1	8	6	4	7	3
3	8	6	4	7	5	2	9	1
8	3	9	7	5	4	1	2	6
4	2	1	8	6	9	7	3	5
7	6	5	3	2	1	8	4	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 4 Compact; 8 Prunes; 9 Teasing; 10 Dipole; 11 Spring; 12 Resettle; 18 Restroom; 20 Patron; 21 Poster; 22 Airmail; 23 Taunts; 24 Leashed. Down: 1 Spiders; 2 Purpose; 3 Pellet; 5 Oversees; 6 Posers; 7 Canine; 13 Turnpike; 14 Portend; 15 Impress; 16 Valise; 17 Cramps; 19 Thomas.
QUICK - Across: 4 Proceed; 8 Roamed; 9 Charity; 10 Mutter; 11 Allure; 12 Cavalier; 18 Pretence; 20 Winner; 21 Regard; 22 Appease; 23 Vision; 24 Meeting. Down: 1 Grimace; 2 Captive; 3 Reveal; 5 Rehearse; 6 Circle; 7 Entire; 13 Imprison; 14 Invalid; 15 Leading; 16 Simple; 17 Invent; 19 Thesis.

Quiz

1. On which animal does Britain's largest flea primarily live?
2. Which Welsh buccaneer became deputy-governor of Jamaica?
3. In which country is Norilsk, the world's most northerly industrial city?
4. Which evangelical movement was founded by John Wesley in 1739?
5. Who is the central character of Homer's Iliad?
6. What is the capital of Bermuda?
7. What is a chow chow?
8. Which sport was invented by Dr James Naismith in 1891?
9. What was the subject of the Surgeon's Photograph of 1934?
10. Of what is eugenics the study?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Sulphuric; 2 Dijon; 3 Eucalyptus; 4 Sergei Eisenstein; 5 Tony McCoy; 6 Four; 7 Heavy water; 8 Chile; 9 Seven; 10 Louvre.

Niner: LABYRINTH

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

74853 gives a London district,
1896392 gives a second London district,
8789 gives a London gallery.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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A pub welcome with open Arms

FANCY a trip out to the countryside for some wholesome pub grub, great service and family-friendly atmosphere? If the answer is yes, you really ought to try out the Hinksford Arms.

The huge beer garden, vast selection of drinks and reasonably-priced menu should be enough to entice a family out to the greener side of Kingswinford. And when your 10oz rib eye steak is cooked to perfection too, it really does tick all the boxes.

Although we live around five miles from the pub, we hadn't realised it was there until a colleague mentioned it was definitely somewhere to try out.

We certainly thanked her for the recommendation because our visit to the venue in Swindon Road really was a lovely way to spend a Saturday evening in the autumn sunshine.

MUSIC

Sitting outside enjoying what I suppose you'd call an Indian Summer, our daughter, Annabelle, aged three, was able to blow off some steam on the wooden climbing frame, which sits in the middle of a huge, grassy beer garden.

One word of warning, if you're planning on eating later than 6pm when live music is on, it's probably best to check when food is being served until as they sometimes close that room early.

Once inside we were handed the menus by a friendly waitress, who really went out of her way to cater for us, ordered another drink and had a look at what to order. It was the classic pub menu so we knew exactly what to expect really, which is sometimes really refreshing.

For starters my wife Kelly went for the stuffed flat mushrooms, which came with either bacon and Stilton or tomato and brie – she went for the first option – and

Start up – pâté of the day served with rustic bread

Pub hub – The Hinksford Arms in Swindon

I choose pâté of the day, which was served with rustic bread. There was certainly plenty to share between two adults and a small child

When it came to the mains, unfortunately the salmon was off the menu, which Kelly had her heart set on, but she was still happy to try the pork medallion stack with black pudding, which came served in a wholegrain apple sauce with mashed potato and seasonal vegetables.

That, in turn, stumped me a little because I had my heart set on that but thought it would be worth trying two different meals at the very least, so played it safe and went for the rib eye steak.The fresh, home-cooked food is served all day every day, whether it's a quick lunch or a family meal, but all the pub classics, sandwiches, ciabatta and food from the grill is all cooked to order, which keeps it nice and fresh.

The main reason my eye was drawn to the steak was probably because on our actual anniversary a few days before while living it up in Rhyl, I had ordered a one and it had been served completely over-cooked and the meat was also tough.

I ordered the steak medium rare and it was served perfectly. Kelly was delighted with her main too, with the pork also tender, the black pudding tasty and a little spicy, the mash smooth and creamy, and the wholegrain apple sauce rich and tangy.

Annabelle went for her usual option, tubes of pasta covered in a nice, tangy tomato sauce, served with two warm pieces of garlic bread. She enjoyed every bit and still had room for a children's strawberry ice cream, which we all ended up sharing as we were pretty full by then.

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Spacious home with lovely gardens on sale with no chain

Having a spacious breakfast kitchen with panoramic views and extensive gardens with decking, 40 James Road, Dudley, is for sale through Trinity Property at £219,950 with no chain.

Within walking distance of Dudley town centre, it has off-road parking and a garage to the front and gardens to the front and rear.

An entrance porch leads to an entrance hall with stairs off to the first floor. It also has a door to a cellarette.

The home has a spacious through lounge/dining room which has a bay window to the front and patio doors to the rear decked area. The splendid breakfast kitchen has great views to the rear garden and is served by a utility.

The breakfast kitchen is an L-shaped room. It is fitted with a range of wall and base units, a breakfast bar, a built-in oven with a hob over, base units, a sink, a square arch to the utility and a door to the rear garden. The utility has access to the garage and a downstairs WC and plumbing for washing machine and dryer. There are two storage cupboards to the ground floor.

Upstairs, the master bedroom has access to the boarded loft room which has Velux windows to the rear. There are two further bedrooms – one single and one double.

Bedroom one lies to the front/right of the property. Bedroom two is to the rear and bedroom three is to the front/left of the home.The house bathroom features a separate shower cubicle with a mixer shower, a whirlpool bath and a WC.

Outside is a pleasant decked area with steps to the rear and a spiral staircase to the terraced garden.

The garden features a lawned area with trees and shrubs.

A spokesman for the selling agents said: "This amazing property must be viewed to be appreciated."

DUDLEY £219,950

TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Trinity Property
TEL: 01384 213395
EMAIL: Dudley@trinityproperty.net

KEY FEATURES

- Splendid detached home
- In Castle High School catchment area
- Spacious breakfast kitchen with views
- 3 good sized bedrooms
- Large loft room

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If you are thinking of selling, look no further than the estate agents in these pages for the best local advice available.

Wonderfully-presented home lies in a popular location

DUDLEY
£329,950 <<<

A wonderfully presented detached property in Hillmeads Drive, Dudley, lies in the popular Oakham area of town.

It is for sale through Taylors at £329,950.

This good-sized family home benefits from gas central heating and double glazing.

Its accommodation briefly comprises of a spacious entrance hall, a well-appointed living room, a dining room, a breakfast kitchen, a study, a guest WC, a utility, four bedrooms, an en-suite to the master, a family bathroom, a fantastic enclosed rear garden, a double garage and there is a driveway to the front.

A spokesman for the selling agents said: "Viewing is essential to fully appreciate this outstanding home."

Contact the selling agents, Taylors, at their local branch office on 01902 880888.

A splendid top floor flat in a good area

DUDLEY
£95,000

This splendid second (top) floor two-bedroomed apartment in Ripley Grove, Dudley, is for sale through Trinity Property at £95,000.

It lies in a sought-after and convenient cul-de-sac location within easy reach of local amenities, schools and public transport links.

The impressive, spacious accommodation is well presented and comprises ample living space and well-appointed bedrooms. This property benefits from gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking on a private car park with visitors' spaces. It has a hallway leading to two bedrooms, a fitted bathroom/WC and a living room/fitted kitchen with a dining area.

Contact Trinity Property on 01384 213 395.

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CGI of The Sherwood 3 bedroom home at Woodlands. Photographs of typical Kier Living showhome interiors. Elevations and finishes may vary.*Help to buy available upon request subject to terms and conditions.

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TENNYSON ROAD — Price £194,950

Presenting to the market a three bedroom semi-detached residence situated on the favoured 'poets corner' part of The Straits, having modern and inviting accommodation ideal for growing families.

EPC rating: C

CHARNWOOD AVENUE — Price £279,950

- A beautiful 'dormer' house
- Favoured cul-de-sac
- FOUR bedrooms
- Full of potential

EPC rating: F

SWALLOWFIELDS ROAD — Price £205,000

- A modern semi-detached
- Open plan layout
- Garage converted into kitchen

EPC rating: D

CEDARWOOD ROAD — Price £186,950

- A detached Bungalow
- Two bedrooms
- Office space/study area
- Conservatory to the rear

EPC rating: D

THE ALLEY — Price £164,950

- Beautifully presented
- Three bedroom semi
- Integral garage
- Modern Kitchen

EPC rating: C

LARCH GROVE — Price £259,950

- A well presented detached
- FOUR bedrooms
- Modern spacious kitchen
- Utility room & WC

EPC rating: C

HARTLAND ROAD — Price £204,950

- Excellent size detached
- TWO reception rooms
- Three bedrooms
- South facing rear garden

EPC rating: D

SOUTHERNDOWN ROAD — Price £225,000

- A 'Mucklow' style semi
- Brownswall Estate
- Beautifully presented
- Breakfast kitchen

EPC rating: TBC

THE LINDENS NEWBRIDGE — Price £76,000

- First floor flat
- Investment opportunity
- With a sitting tenant
- Acheiving £485 PCM

EPC rating: E

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The Property Ombudsman

A lot of interest is expected in the sale of this lovely three-bedroom residence

DUDLEY
£209,950 >>>

This splendid three-bedroomed detached double fronted family home in King Edmunds Street, St James Mews, Dudley, lies in a pleasant location with views to the front and side.

It is for sale through Trinity Property at £209,950.

Outside there is a driveway for up to three cars and a good-sized garage to the side.

Inside, the property offers an airy, light dining kitchen and a lounge with windows on two sides, a downstairs WC and under-stairs storage.

On the first floor there are three good-sized double bedrooms and house bathroom/WC.

The master bedroom also has an en-suite shower/WC.

The private garden to the rear has a patio area and lawn with access to the side gate leading to the drive.

Call 01384 213395.

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£289,950

KINGSWINFORD, Court Crescent

With a HUGE ESTABLISHED REAR GARDEN this SUCCESSFULLY EXTENDED SEMI DETACHED HOME is well placed for the sought after Summerhill secondary school, a position enhancing the GENEROUS layout with THREE GOOD BEDROOMS. With DRIVE/ PARKING and LARGE DETACHED GARAGE EPC D

£254,950

LOWER GORNAL, Ruskin Avenue, Straits

Offering huge potential with well proportioned living space, this DETACHED BUNGALOW is located in the extremely popular STRAITS area. With central heating and part double glazing, this TWO BEDROOM property also benefits from; entrance porch, open-plan reception hall-diner, living room, kitchen-diner, refitted shower room, side hall/ utility, conservatory, tandem garage, enclosed rear garden, driveway to front and offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £224,950

DUDLEY, King Edmund Street

A superbly presented modern detached property located within close proximity to Dudley town centre. Benefiting from gas central heating and double glazing this family home also boasts; entrance hall, guest W/C, living room, kitchen-diner, THREE BEDROOMS with ensuite to master, family bathroom, enclosed rear garden and garage with driveway. VIEWING IS ESSENTIAL. EPC Rating C. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £209,950

WOODSETTON, Wansbeck Walk

Located on the extremely well regarded 'Poplars' development in Woodsetton, this DETACHED property benefits from, central heating and double glazing as well as boasting; porch, hall, guest W/C, Living room, dining room, kitchen, utility room, sitting room/ family room, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, enclosed rear garden and parking to front. Viewing essential. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £204,950

PENSNETT, Woodfield Avenue

An EXTENDED SEMI DETACHED FAMILY HOME offering a GENEROUS and WELL PRESENTED layout, which includes Lounge, Extended Second Sitting Room with Dining Area off, Kitchen, Ground Floor WC, THREE BEDROOMS and Bathroom. With BROAD DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and the LARGE, REAR GARDEN. EPC D

£189,950

KINGSWINFORD, Ragees Road

Enjoying distant rear views from this pleasant cul de sac, this EXTENDED & GREATLY ENLARGED MODERN THREE BEDROOM DETACHED BUNGALOW offers an exceptionally spacious layout, including a CONSERVATORY EXTENSION, plus a block paved driveway and a tiered rear garden. EPC E

No upward chain

£184,950

COSELEY, Lansdowne Close, Bramford estate

An extremely well presented traditional semi-detached property located on the very much sought after BRAMFORD ESTATE in Coseley. Benefiting from having gas central heating and double glazing, this EXTENDED family home also comprises of; entrance hallway, living room, extended dining room, kitchen, utility, guest W/C, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, attractive enclosed rear garden, driveway to front and offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC:D SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £174,950

DUDLEY, Ripley Grove

Meticulously maintained, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed intermediate 'starter home' with superb distant views at head of cul-de-sac briefly comprising; hall, fitted cloakroom, kitchen with range of high gloss cream finish units & integrated appliances, living/dining room (with double French doors out to the garden), store. Two double bedrooms (one with double wardrobes),shower room (potential bathroom). Delightful rear garden, parking. EPC C. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £150,000

SEDGLEY, Gate Street

REMARKABLY SPACIOUS! - Tremendously enhanced, gas centrally heated, majority double glazed Edwardian semi detached of character excellently situated within level walking distance of Sedgley's Bull Ring comprising; lounge (with bay & cast fireplace), store, sitting room (with double French doors out to garden & cast fireplace), 19 ft kitchen with a fine range of units, lobby, toilet. Two double bedrooms, bathroom. garden, EPC: E. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £149,950

DUDLEY, Richborough Drive

OUTSTANDING SPECIFICATION! Only recently comprehensively refurbished to an exemplary standard throughout; a gas centrally heated, uPVC double glazed, "starter home" in favoured district briefly comprising; reception hall, refitted kitchen, 16'7" lounge (with patio doors), two double bedrooms, reappointed bathroom with contemporary white suite/chrome detailing, Lengthy garden, parking. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £140,000

WOODSETTON, Bramford Drive

Occupying a sweeping corner position in the popular Woodsetton area, this semi-detached property is an ideal family home. Benefiting from having NO UPWARD CHAIN this house also comprises entrance hallway, living room, dining room, breakfast-kitchen, guest W/C, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, part double glazing, enclosed rear garden with good-sized front garden and driveway. VIEWING IS ESSENTIAL. ●●●MINE SEARCH AVAILABLE●●● EPC: F SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £134,950

DUDLEY, Himley Road

●●MINE SEARCH AVAILABLE●● Deceptively spacious TRADITIONAL terraced property offers huge living space over three storeys. As well as benefiting from gas central heating and double glazing and retaining many original features, it also boasts reception hall, living room, dining room, extended refitted kitchen, guest W/C (with potential for wet room), THREE BEDROOMS, loft, family bathroom, cellar, rear garden with ample parking. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £129,950

DUDLEY, Old Park Road

An EXTENDED UPVC double glazed gas centrally heated (not tested) for improvement offering potential. Accommodation includes reception hall, under stair store, living room with bay, extended l shape 18'3" reception room, extended l shape 14'9" kitchen and a CONSERVATORY beyond, three bedrooms, shower room, potential off road parking, lengthy rear garden. EPC Rating D. SEDGLEY.

Price: £125,000

SEDGLEY, Birch Road

A lovingly maintained and nicely presented SEMI DETACHED property in the much sought after area of SEDGLEY. Benefiting from gas central heating and double glazing this ideal starter home also boasts; porch, entrance hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, TWO BEDROOMS, bathroom, garage with utility area and guest W/C, enclosed rear garden and driveway with ample parking to front. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £124,950

COSELEY, Rainbow Street

A conveniently positioned semi-detached property located in the popular Coseley area briefly comprising; entrance hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, THREE BEDROOMS, large frontage with potential for parking and enclosed rear garden. The property is also offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £124,950

WORDSLEY, Marshall Crescent

An INCREDIBLY DECEPTIVE DUPLEX GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT combining wonderful period features with a sought after setting. All beautifully appointed to include to reception hall, large open plan Lounge through to breakfast kitchen, EXCELLENT DOUBLE BEDROOM spacious bathroom. Including PARKING. EPC C

£113,950

COSELEY, Hessian Close

OUTSTANDING QUALITY! - Stunning, comprehensively upgraded &improved GROUND FLOOR gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed apartment at head of cul-de-sac convenient for many amenities. Superb accommodation includes; hall, cloaks cupboard, boiler cupboard, lounge, refitted kitchen with a fine range of units, reappointed bathroom (with white suite and chrome detailing), two generous double bedrooms, allocated slabbed/fenced rear garden. EPC:C. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £84,950

MOTORING

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO THE BEST CARS ON THE MARKET

Kia's Stonic fills its little SUV role with style

By Ian Donaldson

Nobody needs a watch the size of a coffee cup's saucer or a handbag you'd have trouble checking in as Ryanair cabin baggage, but lots of people want both of them – although probably not the same people.

And nobody really needs a smallish car that looks as though it could wade streams and shrug off life in the depth of a forest, even if it would drown with the first challenge and pine for its mummy on the other.

No, people want a small SUV because they think it looks good. Not for them the dull practicality of a mere hatchback; not when they want to be seen as adventurous types who stand out from the crowd.

And just at the moment the world can't make enough small SUVs. Sales in Europe alone are expected to double to more than two million annually in the four years leading to 2020. And these are cars with buyers driven by desire, not bargain hunters desperate for a discount.

Sibling

It means they'll happily pay a premium for the car of their dreams. And that makes the car manufacturers anxious to provide them with something to buy…

Enter the Kia Stonic, the South Korean car maker's first entry to the small SUV segment and a new baby sibling to the firm's biggest seller by far in the UK, the Sportage. The name is a mix of 'speedy' and 'tonic', if you were wondering.

Based on the new Rio small hatchback and built alongside it in Korea, the Stonic is offered in a smaller number of versions and aimed at buyers with a bit more to spend – there's a premium of around £2,000 if you choose Stonic over Rio.

For the extra cash you'll have a car that is a bit longer and wider than the Rio (now 4,140mm and 1,760mm respectively) but, crucially, 70mm taller and with a bit more ground clearance thrown in too. It means a car that fills its little-SUV role with style, even if there is no 4x4 version because hardly anyone would buy it.

Instead, there's a car that gives a buyer the chance to personalise their purchase with two-tone paint, picking out roof, door mirror casings and spoiler in contrasting colours, and choice of a pair of trim levels.

The Stonic is a car that gives buyers the chance to personalise their vehicle in several ways

You will also find a dashboard that borrows heavily from the Rio, so it's crisply finished, logically set out and very easy to read but a bit dull and black. The top version is lightened a little by splashes of add-on colour, but the interior remains more practical (and reasonably roomy front and rear and in the boot) than inspiring.

Kicking off the Stonic range is the £16,295 car in '2' grade with a 1.4 litre 98bhp petrol engine. It will reach 107mph, hit 62mph in 12.2 seconds and travel 51.4 miles on a gallon in the official test, while putting out 125g/km of CO2 in the process. It is expected to be a modest seller, despite a kit count that includes 17ins alloy wheels, air conditioning, all-round electric windows, Bluetooth with voice recognition, rear parking sensors and a six-speaker sound system with steering wheel mounted controls.

The First Edition Stonics, from £19,695, add two-tone paint with a contrasting roof, smart key entry, auto air con, heated front seats and steering wheel and splashes of chrome on window trim and door handles.

Next engine up is a three-cylinder turbocharged petrol unit with 118bhp and a 115mph top speed and 9.9 seconds to 62mph time, backed up with 56.5mpg and 115g/km in the official tests. It costs £16,995 and the £700 premium over the entry-level car makes it look the bargain of the bunch.

Out on a varied test route it delighted with sharp steering and a well controlled ride once out of town, where it turns a bit too firm, to produce a car that made you want to keep on driving, enjoying a snick-snick gear change along the way. A dash readout of 45.2mpg cemented the impression of a car that punches above its weight.

For another £800 you can move to a 1.6 litre 108bhp diesel, offering 112mph/10.9 seconds and 67.3mpg and 109g/km. Driving the same test route saw 53.9mpg at journey's end – an expected economy boost from the diesel power unit but in a car that felt heavier and much less inclined to enjoy itself.

In either car you can tell the Stonic (designed mostly in Europe) was also honed on roads in the same part of the world and for drivers who value driving enjoyment a bit more highly than soggy-springed comfort. And quite right too.

Honda launches special edition of CR-V S Plus

Honda UK has announced the addition of a new variant to the popular CR-V line up. Expected to arrive in dealer showrooms next week, the S Plus special edition will offer customers additional features and styling for less.

On top of the standard features, the S Plus has a dynamic and stylish appearance with the following new exterior features; body coloured front and rear aero bumpers, tailgate spoiler and stylish running boards, giving the S Plus a sporty but yet mature look.

Based on the S Navi grade, the new S Plus model includes the following as standard: climate control dual auto A/C, cruise control, Bluetooth® hands free telephone (HFT) system, reversing camera, city brake active system and HONDA Connect™ in-car audio and information system with Garmin navigation. The S Plus is available in both 2.0 petrol and 1.6 diesel engine in two wheel drive and manual transmission.

The S Plus petrol model will be priced at £23,500, with the diesel model priced at £24,500. Both of the prices include a saving offer of £3,000.

Dave Hodgetts, managing director of Honda UK, said: "This special edition CR-V is a fantastic addition to the world's bestselling SUV line up, and will make for a great ending to 2017 for Honda in the UK. The S Plus provides customers with approximately £1,500 of features for free, aligning with Honda's objective of supplying products of the highest quality, at a reasonable price for utmost customer satisfaction."

Renault Kadjar scoops two top gongs in major awards

The Renault Kadjar has added to its many accolades by being voted the Best Used Car and Best Used Mid-Size SUV in the Auto Express Used Car of the Year 2018 awards.

The duo of awards add further strings to the bow of the highly acclaimed Kadjar, officially recognising its unrivalled appeal and suitability as a pre-owned vehicle.

After trawling the classifieds and comparing the Renault Kadjar against its rivals and all other potential used cars across 17 categories, the Auto Express judging panel praised the popular crossover for its unbeatable package of value, style, driving dynamics and equipment.

Graham Hope, Editor, Auto Express, said: "The Kadjar is one of the best family SUVs on the road. It looks great, has some interesting tech and is good to drive, too, with decent performance and strong fuel economy across the range. And with used prices now starting from around the £11,500 mark, it is exceptional value as a second-hand purchase. Few cars appeal so much as an excellent all-rounder, and it is a worthy winner of our Used Car of the Year award."

Vincent Tourette, managing director, Groupe Renault UK, said of the awards: "The Renault Kadjar is already a highly attractive proposition as a new car and these awards, which see it eclipse some very fierce and more expensive competition, confirm that it is just as desirable when it enters the used car market.

"Buying a used vehicle can be quite a daunting prospect for some drivers, but with the Kadjar being voted the best used car by such a highly regarded industry voice, customers are safe in the knowledge that choosing it is a decision that satisfies both the head and the heart. We're delighted that Auto Express has recognised that the Renault Kadjar continues to provide cost-conscious drivers with a fantastic, even more affordable package as it becomes a used car."

The latest awards add to the Renault Kadjar's ever-growing trophy cabinet. The crossover has won myriad awards, including first place in the Off-Road/SUV category and third place overall in the Auto Express Driver Power 2016 awards, which are determined entirely by owner feedback, and Best Crossover in the 2016 Fleet World Awards.

Since its introduction in the UK in 2015, the Kadjar has strengthened Renault's presence in the crossover market – building on the success of its compact crossover sibling, Captur.

The Kadjar's combination of striking design, efficient powertrains, spacious interior, high levels of standard specification, and five-star Euro NCAP rating have proved a hit with British car buyers with sales of over 45,000 since launching in the UK.

Kodiaq is well up to the challenge

By Carmel Stewart

The Kodiaq SUV has the task of breaking new ground in the ever-expanding, highly competitive SUV market as Skoda's first ever seven-seater. And it is well up to the challenge.

As we have come to expect from Skoda, it covers pretty well all bases when it comes to choice – five engines (three petrol; two diesel), five trims, 2WD, 4WD, manual or DSG automatic transmissions and five or seven seats. Those two additional seats are standard in SE L trim and above and can be folded down into the floor when not in use.

The long wheelbase and short overhangs of the Kodiaq allow for a reasonable amount of interior space and, although the middle row of seats can slide and fold, there is a high transmission tunnel which means piggy-in-the-middle will have to share foot space with those on either side.

In addition, the rear two seats are really only suitable for smaller members of the family, or for the school-run.

For a size comparison in the Skoda range, the Kodiaq is slightly longer than the Octavia, while in the SUV segment as a whole, it sits between the Hyundai Santa Fe and the Kia Sorento.

The most economical of the engines tested was the robust 150ps 2.0litre diesel linked to the seven-speed DSG transmission which clocked an official average of 56.5mpg. Average economy of the smaller 1.4litre 150ps petrol unit was a touch under 40mpg and offers a nimble, composed and enjoyable drive. Well matched to the six-speed DSG, it tackled the steepest of inclines with ease.

Ultra-modern connectivity is a high priority in the car

Two extra seats in SE L trim can be folded into the floor

The long wheelbase and short overhangs of the Kodiaq allow for a reasonable amount of interior space

Choice will come down to usage. For those who put in the miles and expect the Kodiaq to earn its keep, clearly the diesel will tick all the boxes.

For school runs and city centre commutes, the petrol will more than suffice.

Options well worth considering include the Drive Mode Select which allows the driver to adjust the engine management, gearing ratio and power steering input to suit varying road conditions.

Ultra-modern connectivity, while not on everyone's list, has been given a high priority in the Kodiaq, with the inclusion of the Skoda Connect online service which integrates all the traffic flow, Google Earth, fuel stops, parking info and the like, as well as an automatic emergency call in the event of an accident. In addition, a very useful app alerts the owner to any unauthorised movement of the car.

Fun stuff to look for as you check out the trim levels include umbrellas in the door panels, ice scraper on the fuel cap, foot-activated power tailgate and rechargeable torch.

The Kodiaq range has a starting price of £22,190 for the S trim, five-seat, 1.4 litre 125ps manual petrol rising to £36,135 for the top spec seven-seat Edition, powered by the 2.0 litre 190ps diesel, 4x4 with the DSG transmission.

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MG's new compact SUV on sale now

With sales of compact-SUV and small crossovers continuing to grow across Europe, up 10 per cent in the first half of 2017, MG Motor UK has increased its offering in the market with its all-new MG ZS. A global car which has been re-engineered specifically for the UK audience, the MG ZS demonstrates MG's continued commitment to design excellence, engineering innovation and affordable style.

Available from UK dealers now, the MG ZS has already attracted significant attention since it was officially unveiled at the London Motor Show earlier this year. The intervening six months has seen thousands of people register their interest in the car, with dealers expecting this to translate to record sales figures in the latter part of the year.

With the entry-level model available on the road from just £12,495 the MG ZS also launches with a host of competitive finance offers.

Coming with one of the longest fully transferable warranties in its class, the MG ZS offers a seven year/80,000-mile warranty as standard across all variants, testament to MG's confidence in the quality of its design, engineering and manufacturing operations.

The MG ZS is a global car with a distinct British feel. Completely reengineered by the UK engineering team, this MG ZS has been tested on UK roads and developed for UK drivers. As such, the Excite and Exclusive models come with three power-assisted steering modes – Urban, Normal and Dynamic – which are designed to give the driver complete control over their ride.

Firmly committed to ensuring customers get exceptional value for money, the MG ZS comes with most of the 'extras' as standard. An industry-leading 8" touch sensitive infotainment screen is supported by DAB radio (on the Exclusive and Excite models), while Bluetooth hands-free and remote central locking is available across the range. Cruise control is also included, while air conditioning comes as standard on Excite and Exclusive models, and Satellite Navigation and a rear camera are standard on the Exclusive variant.

There is a huge 8" touchscreen

MG also offers Apple CarPlay on the MG ZS Excite and Exclusive variants at no extra cost. The safer way to use your iPhone in the car, CarPlay takes the things you want to do with your iPhone while driving and puts them on the car's in-built display.

With the massive 8" touchscreen in the MG ZS Excite and Exclusive models, this means you can get directions, make calls, send and receive messages and listen to music, all in a way that allows you to stay focused on the road.

The MG ZS showcases the future design direction for MG, expressing 'Emotional Dyanmism'

The MG ZS showcases the future design direction for MG, expressing an 'Emotional Dynamism' which is set to feature across all upcoming models. A distinctive grille, increased MG branding and delicate nose gives the car a refined look that is carried through to its sweeping corners and solid backend.

With one of the most generous shoulder, leg and headroom capacities in its segment, the MG ZS offers a premium travelling experience for driver and passenger alike – providing around 55mm additional rear shoulder room and 80mm rear headroom than the segment average.

An incredible 448 litres of boot capacity (some 60 litres larger than the typical Compact-SUV) – plus a split-level boot – provides plenty of room for prams, luggage, outdoor leisure equipment or the weekly shop, while keen cyclists and adventure sports fans will benefit from numerous compartments throughout the car which provide additional storage.

Customers can choose from a 1.5 DOHC VTI-tech, four-cylinder engine with smooth and responsive five-speed manual gearbox, or a 1.0 GDI turbocharged, three-cylinder version of the engine which complements the six-speed automatic gearbox option to produce a fast-paced and dynamic ride for drivers looking to experience a little extra.

With a larger fuel tank than the equivalent Nissan Juke, the MG ZS offers increased range, less need to fill the tank, lower CO2 emissions and an improved performance – with the MG ZS delivering 1-100kph in 10.9 seconds, compared to 12.0 seconds for its rival.

Having been tested to extremes in Sweden at minus 35 degrees Celsius, Spain at 42 degrees Celsius, Austria at exceptionally high altitudes and Wales in the typical British drizzle, MG is confident its Compact-SUV can stand up to any challenge.

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By Jupiter this unique Suzuki Jimny sells itself

A road-focused car but one that will scamper off road very happily

By Ian Donaldson

How about this for a Suzuki car sales pitch: "We don't put any effort into selling them".

As a bald statement it might drive the car maker's marketing department into a frenzy until you hear the rest of the statement from the mouth of a senior Suzuki person: "We always sell 1,000 of them every year because there's nothing else like it."

When you learn this steady – and apparently easy – seller is Suzuki's tiny but off-road focused Jimny you may begin to understand why there's little reason to push the car into the salesroom spotlight. For the Jimny is clearly not a car for everyone. Not for most people, to be honest, but for that loyal band of Jimny believers nothing else will do. No wonder most of them keep their cars for seven or eight years – before swapping for a new one.

This is the sort of loyalty a car maker can normally only dream about, although they'd be happier if the cars were chopped in for new ones a bit sooner, of course.

And there really is nothing like a Jimny to meet a very specific set of requirements. Put simply, a Jimny must drive pretty much like a road-focused car yet cheerily scamper off road at its master or mistress's command.

Crucially, too, it must not cost too much to buy or run. How about £12,999 for starters, which buys a car

The car skips over ruts and wades through streams

with pukka four-wheel drive capability, right down to a low ratio gearbox that lets this light and modestly dimensioned machine skip over ruts and wade through streams with the near certain knowledge it will emerge like an eager spaniel; shrugging off the mud and eager for the next challenge.

The Jimny is but part of a Suzuki range that takes in five models with differing degrees of off-road competence, all bearing Allgrip badges on the back but coming with three levels of expertise in the wild.

At the top of the Allgrip tree sits the Jimmy with its 'Pro' rating, taking in the already mentioned low ratio gears and adding a locking differential – the sort of kit that singles out the truly committed mud plugger.

One down in the Allgrip hierarchy comes 'Select', which lets the driver put the car (selected Vitara and S-Cross models) into mud or snow settings via rotary controller between the front seats and turn them into the sort of vehicle that will tackle a slippery hill (up or down) without panicking driver and passengers.

Around one in three Vitara and S Cross buyers take their car with the Allgrip option, a figure that drops to fewer than one in ten when we move down the range to Ignis and Swift models, which come with Allgrip 'Auto'.

This demands no extra actions from the driver but will push drive from front to rear wheels if it detects slipping from the front. You'd never know anything was happening, but you'd be glad on a snowy school run.

But back to the Jimny. Slipping into the driver's seat is almost like entering a time warp, when cars were simpler and smaller. There is a pared down feel to the dashboard and not a hint of executive style plushness. Rather, it is solid and simple and feels like it would last forever.

You quickly get used to the lack of width, discovering that there really is enough space between you and your passenger on one side and the door on the other. This intimacy pays off in spades when the rock strewn track ahead narrows to a couple of donkeys' width.

Keeping front and rear wheels close to one another makes the Jimny delightfully maneuverable.

As well as with its size the Jimny shows its age with a 1.3 litre petrol engine that puts out enough CO2 to earn it a stiff £500 tax slap on first registration and provides modest performance on the smooth stuff. A top speed of 87mph and 0-62mph time of 14.1 seconds put it firmly in the slow lane – which simply doesn't matter for all the Jimny owners who love their cars. They're also unlikely to be bother by an official fuel consumption of 39.8mpg.

Every Jimny has DAB radio, heated door mirrors and front electric windows. The higher spec SZ4 (£14,299 or £15,299 with auto transmission) adds air con, leather and cloth front seats, alloy wheels and tinted glass in the rear.

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what's on

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3 Home & Services

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07980 435999.

LOW MILEAGE

HYUNDAI AMICA 999CC

11,600 miles, 2002, good condition, long MoT,

£575.

07754 121452 after 5pm, no messages please.

BARGAIN

JAGUAR S-TYPE SE AUTO

2002, petrol, 97,000 miles, 9 months MoT, alarmed, electric windows, leather interior no rips or tears.

£750

07709 039785.

BARGAIN

NISSAN ALMERA

T reg., 80,000 miles, MoT March 2018, great runner, good condition inside and out, Lady owner, lots of service history.

£275 ono

07487 797639.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

TOYOTA COROLLA

1998, 1.6SR hatchback, excellent condition, 48,400 miles, long MoT.

£995 ono.

07751 090071.

BARGAIN

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 ELEGANCE

Reg 2003, silver colour, MoT 5 months, 3dr, 66k mileage, good condition.

£425 o.n.o.
07791 703843
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Cars Over £1500

PRESTIGE

BMW X3 3.0 SD

M Sport auto, 2008, silver with black leather, usual refinements, loads of history, totally pristine condition, 195k but looks and drives like 50k.

£5,995.
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BARGAIN

FIAT PANDA

2010,

65,000 miles,

MoT till July 2018,

very good condition.

£1,850 ono

07512 347004.

FORD FIESTA ZETEC

2007, 1.6TDCi 64,000 Miles, Blue, abs, electric windows, electric mirrors, fsh, alarm long Mot Superb condition.

£2,195

01902 744023

FORD FIESTA GHIA

1.4, 80,600 miles, Ford Fiesta Service History, electric windows, elelctric mirror, mot Feb18, leather trim, 1 owner

£1,700 ono.
07958 400177.

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2007, 83k miles, very good condition, full MoT, red, electric windows, electric mirrors, CL, cruise control, sunroof, stereo, CD, spots, spacious.

£2,645 ono
07941886262

JAGUAR XF DIESEL

2009, 62,000 miles, blue, air con, MoT, alloys, Navigation System, heated leather interior, reverse camera.

£9,250 ono.

01562 631640.

IMMACULATE

KIA PICANTO AUTOMATIC

Dec 2012, only 11,700 miles, fsh, 12 months MoT, 2 year Kia Warranty.

£5,250 ono.
07712 002426.

NISSAN MICRA N-TECH 1.2L

16v N-Tech. Metallic blue, 2010, 94,500 miles, 10 months MoT, fsh, one owner, electric windows, air con, CD, built in Sat Nav and Bluetooth.

£1,750.
07786 988292.

BARGAIN

NISSAN NOTE

2014,

57,000 miles, FSH,

one lady owner,

excellent condition.

£5,000

07772 410201.

PEUGEOT 206CC ALLURE

2005, 55 plate 46,000 Miles, blue, abs, electric windows, electric mirrors, air con, Full service history alarm, MOT Amazing condition.

£1,695

01902 744023

DIESEL

PEUGEOT 307 SW

Black, 06, alloys, 5/7 seater, MoT June 2018, low mileage, 66,000, diesel, owned 9 years.

£1,650.

07866 023175 or 01902 765944.

PEUGEOT 308 SPORTIUM 1.6

5 door. 2011 (11).
Two owners from new.
FSH (74,000 miles).
Full MoT. Alloys.
A/C. Immaculate throughout.

£3,495.
Telephone 07970 705466.

RENAULT CLIO DYNAMIQUE

2012, 38,000 miles, abs, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, fsh, long MoT, cruise control, Navigation System, half leather.

£2,999 ono.

07879 403302.

MUST BE SEEN

VAUXHALL CORSA

2013, 5-dr hatchback silver, 1.2 petrol, 31,500 miles, MoT Feb 2018.
Very good condition.

£4,250.
01746 789551.

SHOWROOM CONDITION

VAUXHALL INSIGNIA

2010, metallic black, immaculate condition, 12 months MoT, 26,500 miles,

£5,000.
07810 566795.

VOLKSWAGEN FOX 1.2

3 door, hatchback, 2007, black, petrol, manual, MoT September 2018, 55,000 miles, two keys, alloys, excellent condition.

£1,695 ono.

Telephone 01562 911634 or 07871 521216.

Genuine calls only please.

VW GOLF

1.6, 2014, diesel Match, 14,300 miles, red, 5-door, one lady owner, exceptional condition.

£11,400.
07772 095031.

VW JETTA 1.6 FSI S

Petrol, 2009, one owner, 63,000 miles, full VW service history, alloys, a/c, radio/CD, 2 keys, 10 months MoT.

£2,995.

01902 850622.

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WANTED, CLASSIC Car. Private cash buyer. Any condition, anything considered.
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for scrap or damaged cars and commercials. Spares for sale.
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9 Local Information

Public Notices

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

Geoffrey Kibble trading as GK Transport Ltd, Patrick Gregory Road, Wednesfield WV11 3DU is applying to change an existing licence as follows:
To add an operating centre to keep THREE goods vehicles and FIVE trailers at Furmanac Ltd, 71, 3rd Avenue, Pensnett Industrial Estate, Kingswinford DY6 7FF.
Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at West Midlands Traffic Area, Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.
Dated: 2nd November 2017

citizens advice Dudley Borough

The Board of Trustees extend an invitation to you to attend our

Annual General Meeting

To be held on
Tuesday 28th November 2017
at 6.45 pm

Brierley Hill Methodist Church
Bank Street, Brierley Hill
DY5 3DT

All are invited to attend

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience youmay fax any advertising requirements to

Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk

(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

10 Personals

Personal

FREE TEXT MESSAGES from women wanting discreet ADULT FUN! Call 0121 620 2445 for full details. Discretion assured!

LONELY WIDOWER

Late 70's, 5ft 6in tall, own house, own car, GSOH, happy outlook on life, seeks a lady with not too many ties, to be a Partner eventually, to share the good times and the bad.

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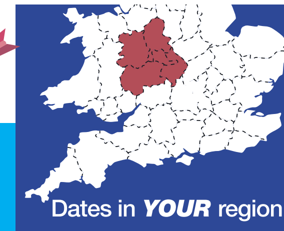

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To ***Place*** your advert call:

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follow the simple instructions. You will also get ***£10 SMS CHAT CREDIT***

To ***Place*** your ad by text

Simply text **REG** followed by your first name, date of birth, area and your advert (max 155 characters) and send to **80098 FREE** Standard Network rates apply.

YOU can now ***Date ONLINE*** or via your mobile just visit:

http://dating.expressandstar.com

To ***Reply*** to members call:

0906 500 3955

calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

Have the adverts 6-digit box no written down and do ***key-it-in promptly*** when asked. Don't forget to leave contact details for replies.

To ***Reply*** by text:

Text... **REPLY26** (leave space) box number (leave space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY26** 123456 **hi get in touch...** then send to **80098** Successfully received messages cost £1.50 per SMS received (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

Been left a message? ***Pickup*** your replies on:

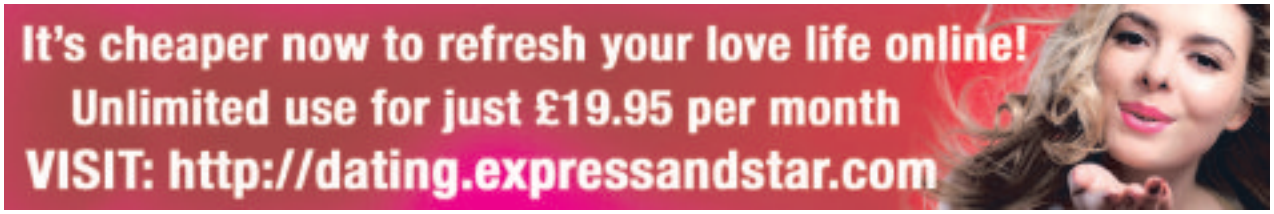
0906 500 3957

calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

THE biggest UK on-line database of 17 million UK REAL users waiting to meet ***you***.. ***visit..*** **http://dating.expressandstar.com**

Single Women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.



ELIZABETH, 45, fed up with lonely nights! Blonde blue eyed, no children/ties, WLTM someone for cosy nights in and TLC. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429221**

YAZ, Asian lady, 32yrs, very slim and pretty. Hoping to meet a strong minded, dominant, resourceful man. Mature please 45+ **Text Only. Box: 4177148**

SHARON, 48, tall slim attractive, lives alone with no ties, love romanticising and WLTM man for good times together, maybe more. Any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429125**

SOPHIE, 46yrs, attractive professional lady with time on her hands. Hoping to meet a nice gent of any age, text fun, flirt, possible meeting. **Text Only. Box: 4126579**

ATTRACTIVE lady, 70yrs young, slim, fit and young for my age. I'm hoping to meet a kind gent, must have GSOH, age/looks unimportant. Must be smart and good company. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429039**

SARAH black lady, works as a nurse. 48yrs young, hoping to meet a younger man for some fun. Let me be your couger and dress me up in my uniform. **Text Only. Box: 4166063**

TINA, 58yrs, slim, passionate and kind. Loves eating out. Hoping to meet gent 55-63. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429167**

MELANIE, attractive lady, 38yrs, hoping to meet a nice chap, any age, for chats, non complicated times. Must have great soh, looks unimportant. **Text Only. Box: 4037147**

JANE, 49yrs, own home, loves nature, artistic. Love to socialise. WLTM gent any age, must have GSOH. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429165**

I am a discreet married black lady who is hoping to meet a man of any colour for some daytime chats, maybe meet up, maybe just text to prolong the interest in our ways. **Text Only. Box 4063856**

VALERIE, caring thoughtful lady. Attractive with GSOH. Seeking similar gent. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429163**

GEORGINA, 46yrs, sophisticated professional lady (teacher), quite firm but kind! Interested in finding out more? I am interested to chat to you so call me today. **Text Only. Box: 4151593**

ATTRACTIVE lady, late sixties, hoping to meet a nice chap for walking, wining dining, and much much more. Age unimportant ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429161**

Customer support
Call **0207 720 7130** Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm
or email us at **support@jmediauk.co.uk**

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks no strings casual fun. I have my own house, car and am solvent. I'm busty with a firm figure. You must be open minded, age/status unimportant. **Tel: 0906 515 3015 Box: 427633**

ATTRACTIVE widow, 70s, solvent, fit and still attractive GSOH, hoping to meet a nice gent for days out, possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429159**

MARIELLE, 45yrs, curvy attractive lady, likes older men. I'm married so you must be discreet. Lets meet up, and make each other smile again. Call me and lets get to know each other. **Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box: 426853**

SHARON, 48, tall slim attractive, lives alone with no ties, love romanticising and WLTM man for good times together, maybe more. Any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429125**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673**

LINDA, 61, attractive, looking for a good man who is loving, tactile and sensitive. Can you put the spring back in my step? **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429085**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

JANE, 49, attractive young looking female, fit and sporty, has much to offer someone special, would love to be part of a couple again. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429067**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**

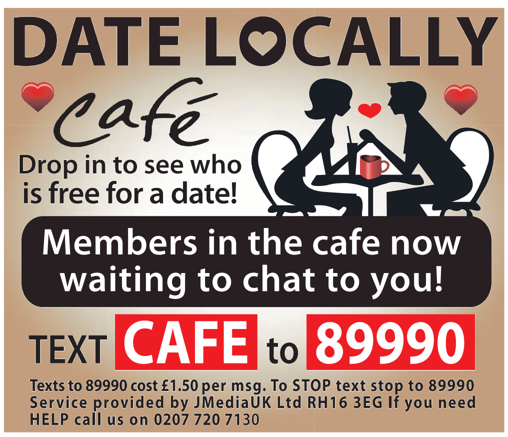
I am Caroline, 37. If you fancy a chat, are tall, dark and handsome, give this tall, fit female a call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428943**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375**

KATHLEEN, attractive lady, 58yrs. Blue-eyed brunette with varied interests. I love life and want a nice gent to share it with me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429047**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365**

SYLVIA, 44yrs, curvy busty build. Very respectful. Hoping to meet a good man to love. Call to hear more, I've lots to tell you. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429045**



HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205**

ATTRACTIVE lady, 56yrs. Slim, brunette who loves life. I'm very passionate and loving. Call me if you are interested. I will reply to all calls and texts. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429043**

CAROLINE, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady, looking for no strings midweek liaisons. **Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box 427533**

ATTRACTIVE lady, 44yrs, easygoing, solvent with OHAC. If you are down to earth and loving call me. Age/looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429041**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979**

NANCY, 40 something years young. Attractive, fun loving and kind. Hoping to meet gent for trips, particularly around Cornwall which I love. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429037**

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. **Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 426851**

I am Caroline, 37. If you fancy a chat, are tall, dark and handsome, give this tall, fit female a call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428943**

JANE, 47, confident full figured and all woman, likes cosy nights in with that special person, looking for friendship maybe more. Age/looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428905**

ATTRACTIVE retired lady, 67yrs. Looks very young with blonde hair and blue eyes. Loves holidays, arts, still interested in meeting a nice man for some fun and laughter. Get in touch by phone or text. ACA.**Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428969**

CAROLE Ann, 56, sensitive, slim, fun loving brunette, loves to cook for her man, seeks tall, handsome male for a tactile relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428891**

PAULINE, Sincere lady, 70s, GSOH, OH&C. Curvy with shoulder length dark hair. Varied interests, theatre and travel. WLTM similar minded gent. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428977**

KATHERINE, 59yrs, slim, attractive petite lady, loves the countryside, happy with the simple things in life. Hoping to meet like-minded chap, any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428975**

ATTRACTIVE lady, young looking 70s, retired nurse, hoping to find a nice gent for cinema, wining, dining, lives pleasures. I'm very kind and miss a mans pleasures. Please contact me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428971**

TRACY, dark eyed brunette, 39, outgoing, down to earth, fit and active has much to offer someone special. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428783**

CARING, thoughtful, young at heart lady, 70s, seeking tall, slim, caring guy with GSOH, for a relaxed friendship and outings. Car driver would be nice. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428871**

DAWN, attractive, easygoing, WLTM mature male for fun loving no strings romance. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428417**

LINDA, attractive fun loving, pretty 43yr old, confident but not pushy, looking to enjoy good times with male 40plus. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428883**

FEMALE 46. honest, genuine and caring. Looking for LTR with a male. **Text only replies. Box no: 4209465**

JANE, curvy blonde, 47, hazel eyes, real zest for life, likes nights in/out, travel, seeks tall loving well built guy who knows how to treat a lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428757**

FRANCESCA 50s, lively blue eyed blonde, many interests, WLTM similar young at heart romantic male for amazing fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428755**

MARY 46, shy curvy brunette looking for someone to be a good fun friend, to laugh with and love. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428073**

SUSANNA, 48, curvy female, romantic, warm and cuddly, seeks similar kind male for a loving relationship with lots of cuddles and kisses. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428661**

ATTRACTIVE lady, 45yrs, loves animals, music, socialising. If you have similar interests then call or text me. Lets meet up and spend time together. Looks unimportant, must have GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428811**

Single Men

COLIN, 50, kind, loving, seeks kind loving, cuddly, large lady, 45-55, for LTR, love and romance. Must like hugs, kisses, cuddles and holding hands. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6091169**

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook, N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady for friendship, outings out etc. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428175**

HI I am a single Indian male in my 50s, and would like to meet a mature female 55+ for a NSA friendship. **Text only replies. Box no: 4627019**

WALSALL male, looking for no strings adult fun, with lady of any nationality, colour or age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428773**

MALE, age 68, very active looking for lady for NSA fun. Can accommodate. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6026972**

EASYGOING likeable man likes a drink at the pub, and nights in front of the telly and a cuddle, looking for lady 45-55. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6066059**

DERBY male, young 57, looking for uncared, unloved married woman looking for discreet adult fun 35-55. Txt me for a good time. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 5321154**

MALE seeks affectionate, tactile, no drama, down to earth woman for nights in/out and loads of cuddles. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418695**

ADVENTUROUS 36 year old, slim, dark hair, has many interests, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235**

MALE would like to meet local female 50/60 for mutual friendship. I'm easygoing and have many interests. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 5071056**

COLIN 72, from Burntwood, looking for loving lady for days out, holidays and company. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 4880436**

MALE, 20s, seeks NSA fun with female. I love a laugh, age isn't important. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6042304**

MALE 46, genuine and honest and very caring looking for a LTR with lady. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 5422168**

MALE 20s, chilled out and happy in life looking for woman to share life with. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6034839**

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923**

MIKE, male, 61, seeks black or Asian lady, any age for adult fun, maybe more. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6010228**

MALE, late 60s, N/S, retired, 5ft9, slim build, enjoys holidays abroad, weekends away, travel, meals out. Looking to meet female, N/S, who enjoys similar interests, to share good times together, for friendship and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428219**

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook, N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady for friendship, outings out etc. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428175**

SINGLE dad, tall, blonde hair, good looking, keeps fit, loves the cinema, meals out, looking for a single lady for date nights. Single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428163**

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, genuine lady, for fun times and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831**

HI my name is Jay. I'm looking for a lady to have a lovely evening with, maybe once or twice a week. Looking forward to hearing from you soon. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427927**

JACK 23, single, tall, young looking guy, kind and respectful, seeking female age/looks not important for mutual NSA fun. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6026038**

MALE 64, fit, non-smoker, looking for NSA fun with lady, any age. I am kind and caring but miss the touch of a woman. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6025714**

TALL, dark, attractive male, 56, 6ft, WLTM an attractive female, any age, for discreet fun and intimate times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428109**

MALE, attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303**

FUN loving Irish man, seeks relationship, for fun times and going out. Please get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428077**

Follow us on twitter **@DATElocally**

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923**

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, honest lady, for fun times and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831**

Gay Singles

Join our Gay online service ***FREE*** visit: ***localgaydate.co.uk***

GAY attractive feminine female would like to meet other gay feminine females for friendship possible relationship. Get in touch. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6062854**

DAVE, 50yrs gay guy, looking for other gay guys for lots of gay fun and games. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6101751**

ELDERLY bi male 70, fit & active, WLTM elderly cross dresser for friendship & cosy nights in. Can accommodate or travel. Burton/Uttoxeter area. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 4380218**

BI curious male, tall, slim, 58, WLTM male, 55-65, for fun times. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 4916215**

BI guy WLTM guys. Nuneaton area. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 5142373**

BI male, retired, looking for fun and friendship with mature male. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 4626882**

BI submissive male seeks discreet meets. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 5560402**

BI male retired, v v broadminded. Seeks a buddy 4 text fun, am interested in naturism and any likeminded mature men, 60-80. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6037452**

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

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Deeney antics spark the wrath of Hughes

FORMER Walsall striker Troy Deeney has been told by Stoke City boss Mark Hughes he "should know better" after sparking a late melee in Watford's 1-0 home Premier League defeat.

In stoppage-time Stoke put the ball out of play after a player went down injured, but rather than pass the ball back the Hornets captain appeared to attempt a cross into the visitors' penalty area.

Joe Allen reacted angrily but found himself being grabbed by the face by the burly Hornets striker as players from both sides squared up. Deeney and Allen were booked, but Stoke boss Hughes was less than impressed by Deeney's conduct.

"I thought it was a bit unnecessary," he said. "Clearly we kicked the ball out and the right thing to do in the spirit of the game is throw it back.

"Deeney, the captain of the club, should know better but he shaped to play it into our box and that's why Joe reacted. I've seen pictures of raised hands and thumbnails in faces which is totally unnecessary."

Woakes the all-round fit to fill Stokes' void

ENGLAND all-rounder Chris Woakes has vowed to help fill the void left by Ben Stokes on the Ashes tour. Stokes has not flown out with the rest of the squad to Australia, having been suspended following an incident outside a Bristol nightclub in September.

The 26-year-old Durham player has not been ruled out of the five-match Test series which begins in Brisbane on November 23, but he is out of consideration for selection until further notice.

Captain Joe Root has suggested England are preparing to play the entire series without him, meaning Woakes and Moeen Ali, and wicketkeeper-batsman Jonny Bairstow, will have to replace those lost runs.

Great Barr-born Woakes said: "Losing Ben as an all-rounder means myself, Moeen and I suppose even Jonny have more of a chance to prove our worth. I take my batting as seriously as possible. I know I have been batting at nine in recent Test matches but whenever I have played for Warwickshire I have obviously batted a lot higher than that."

Event is all a-bout Olympic fighter

THE world's first-ever Punjabi MMA fighter is to visit the West Midlands next month for a charity event.

Olympian and UFC heavyweight Arjan Singh Bhullar will take part in a meet-and-greet event in Birmingham on November 25.

The Indo-Canadian fighter will also tell his life story at the event, which has been organised by the Wolverhampton-based Showfighter group.

Bhullar, aged 31, is currently ranked world number 19 in the MMA heavyweight division by the MMA World Ranking website.

The event is at The Hagley (Ibis Hotel) on Hagley Road, Birmingham. Funds raised will go to the Jet Singh Trust.

Bhullar has represented Canada internationally as a freestyle wrestler at several world championships, at the 2010 Commonwealth Games and at the 2012 Olympic Games. He is from Richmond, British Columbia.

In August 2014, Bhullar had his first amateur fight as a mixed martial artist. He turned pro in November of that year.

Priory Park's Tyriq Allison, left, in action against Olympic's Brian O'Shea

Priory are a big hit in and out the ring

PRIORY Park Boxing Club are warming up for their next venture following a successful debut on the international stage. The Dudley-based outfit hosted an England versus Ireland clash at The Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill that saw the club's boxers take on fighters from the renowned Olympic Boxing Club in Galway.

And the event proved to be a huge hit inside and outside the ring much to the delight of chairman Paul Gough. The night served up a series of high-quality contests in front of a crowd of around 300 with the hosts emerging victorious thanks to victories from Ben Collins, Connor Jones, Jarrod Grant, Tyriq Allison, Tomas Grygkiewicz and Sam Gwilt.

But as well as gaining plaudits for their efforts in the ring, Gough has been delighted with the feedback from the Irish visitors regarding the hospitality on display.

Gough left no stone unturned in his bid to ensure the Olympic contingent enjoyed their stay in the Black Country with a Go Karting night getting the boxers revved up for action. "It was one of the biggest events we have put on as a club, we had never staged an international contest before," said Gough. "But it was a great success and the feedback we have had from Olympic has been outstanding.

"Theysaid they had never been treated like this and looked after so well. That's nice to hear and huge credit to our club.

"It was an expensive show to put it on and it would not have been possible without our sponsors – Richardson Capital, Barclays Bank, Willows Construction and Virtual Guard – so a massive thank you to them. We put all their fighters, coaches and officials up at The Copthorne for two nights. We really went out of our way to look after them.

Lords of the ring – Priory Park boxers ready for their contest with Ireland's Olympic BC

Training

"We picked them up from the airport and then took them to our gym for a training session, and then took them out for some food.

"On the first evening we had a Karting competition at Halesowen, which went down really well and then had some food and drinks after. The lads absolutely loved that. We even had three Priory lads coming first, second and third in that, which was great.

"The Olympic lads had some down-time the following day before the show and then they were driven back to the airport the day after. A lot of hard work went into organising the show but it was worth it. It was great experience for our lads, as we will be going over there to fight next year in the return match."

The standard of boxing also impressed Gough, who doubled up as match-maker with Olympic coach Mick Mogan. "All the bouts were close and the quality was very high," said Gough. "Olympic are the No.1 club in Ireland and have won just about every competition going. One of their lads, Mike Delaney, is a four-time national champion and has won a bronze for GB.

"Their coach Mick Mogan trusted my judgement in matching up the fights and I trusted his. And it worked out because there were some great fights. As well as the international fights, a number of other contests made up a 15-bout bill with the youngest boxer aged 10 and the oldest 24, and we had around 300 people in."

Gough has designs on promoting further international shows and may look north of the border. He said: "It has whet my appetite for more shows like this and I would love to do an England-Scotland-Ireland contest. That could be one for the future."

The club stages a development show at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on Saturday where there will be plenty of action featuring just Priory Park boxers.

And while the club's boxing contingent continues to grow, Gough also runs various fitness classes at the club's Priory Road base. "The club is thriving at the moment. Our membership is rising and I am continually getting texts and calls from people asking if they can join," he said.

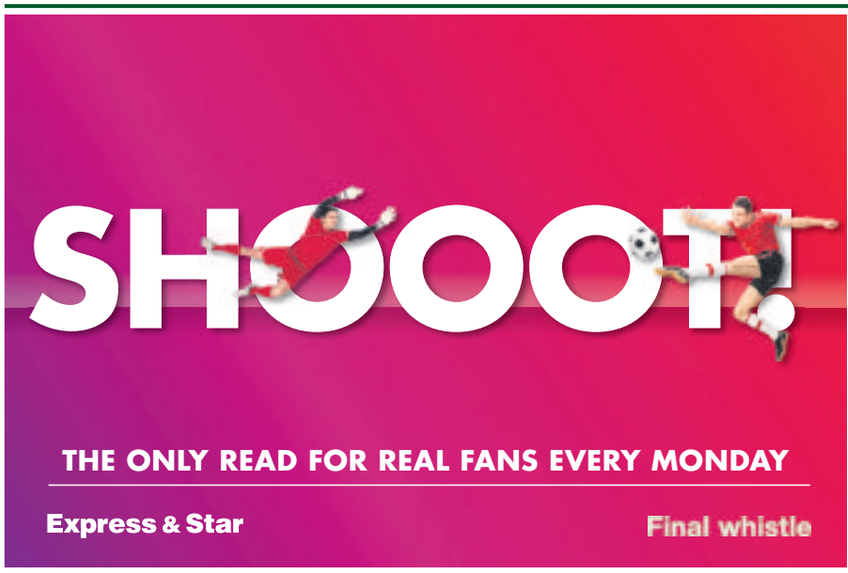
"But it's not just about boxing. We also run various fitness classes at the gym and the parents also get involved. It's like one big happy family."

Tickets for the development show are available priced £15 and £10. Call Paul Gough on 07883 012981.

SPORTING FEATURE

By Nick Elwell

"I would love to do an England-Scotland-Ireland contest. That could be one for the future"



Sport

Boxing club packs punch in and out of the ring

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Free entry to Glassboys for servicemen

Stourbridge 1 Basford United 0

BOSS Gary Hackett praised his tweaked Stourbridge side for emerging with a 1-0 win from their 'hiding to nothing' against Basford United.

The Glassboys were made to battle by a team who are unbeaten and top the division below with a 100 per cent away record. But the win puts Hackett's men into the second qualifying round of the FA Trophy and a tie at St Neots FC on November 11.

Aaron Forde settled the scrappy clash, guiding inside the far post from close range after 61 minutes following strong work down the right by Kennedy Digie and Luke Shearer.

"It has been a testing week," said Hackett. "We were on a hiding to nothing. Our home form has been a bit disappointing so I was very pleased to get through and keep a clean sheet."

Armed forces personnel can watch Stourbridge FC for free this weekend. The Glasssboys' clash with Witton Albion at the War Memorial Athletic Ground is the last home game before Remembrance Sunday and club officials are keen to show their support to Armed Forces personnel.

A spokesman said: "As a token of the club's gratitude for all those who have served to keep us and our country safe over the years, we are offering all current and former servicemen and women free entry to the match."

Servicemen or women should show ID confirming they have served in the forces or their Royal British Legion membership at the turnstiles.

A bucket collection and sales of 'Stourbridge Remembers' poppy pin badges, at £3 each, will go towards the Royal British Legion.

Banks's hosts games in under-17 Euros

WALSALL'S Banks's Stadium will be a host ground for next year's UEFA European Under-17 Championship finals.

The annual tournament, for Europe's 16 elite nations, will be played at venues across the Midlands and South Yorkshire with St George's Park at its heart.

It runs from from May 4-20. The Banks's will stage games along with Burton Albion, Chesterfield, Loughborough University, Rotherham United and St George's Park. Tickets will go on sale in January with the draw being made in April at St George's Park.

World Cup winners England, who won the European Under-17 title in 2010 and 2014, and also finished runners-up to Spain in 2017, qualified automatically as hosts.

Walsall Chief Executive Stefan Gamble said: "We are delighted to be one of the host stadiums. The Banks's Stadium is the ideal venue for international football."

England u-17s head coach Steve Cooper said: "We are very proud to be hosting the men's European Under-17 finals next summer.

"Rotherham and Walsall have hosted a number of England development and women's team fixtures in the past while Burton Albion and Chesterfield are fantastic venues.

"All six venues will give the players an opportunity to perform at different stadiums."

UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin said: "The competition also provides the youngsters with an ideal chance to perform on an international football stage."

POINTS MADE SAFE LATE ON

DK 26 Heathbrook 15

WITH Hereford the visitors to Heathbrook, DK knew they would be in for a tough battle to secure the points.

The weather conditions were improved on the previous week, with the sun out, but the wind was still fairly strong.

DK were playing towards the clubhouse in the first half and soon fell behind.

On nine minutes, Hereford full back Sean Day collected a long kick down the field and went on a mazy run. Progress was only stopped by a covering tackle by Ryan Smitheman who had tracked across from his blindside wing, but the Hereford support was there to take advantage and Bradley Down scored in the scoreboard corner.

With the numerical advantage following a Hereford yellow card, DK were able to mount even more pressure in the Hereford 22,. This led to a DK scrummage close to the Hereford line and in turn resulted in a push over try, Sam Vaughan adding the conversion from wide out.

Tries

DK struck with two well worked tries before half-time, the first from Mitch Grealey, Sam Vaughan crashed the conversion into the upright.

Moments, later DK struck again with a similar try, Nic Adams rounding off a an excellent team move. Vaughan was on target from wide out for a 19-5 half-time lead for DK.

But the game was still in the balance.

Hereford started the second half better than DK and had been able to build territorial pressure with the help of the wind and were rewarded with a try following some good build up playwhich they converted. Moments later a successful penalty kick brought Hereford to 19-15.

But, it was DK who sealed the game, scrum half Jordan Brookes touching down and Nic Adams converting.

This weekend, DK face a trip to Lutterworth.

Danny Hawkins goes on one of his powerful runs for Dudley Kingswinford

King's men on march up the table

BOSS Dave King says there is a feelgood factor around Tividale after they made it three straight wins by overcoming Dudley Sports.

A Dan Smith brace saw The Dale run out 2-1 winners at Hillcrest Avenue on Saturday – a result which moved them up to third in the West Midlands League Premier Division.

Now five points behind leaders Wolverhampton Sporting Community, King's men were facing Bustleholme on Tuesday night in the JW Hunt Cup before resuming their league campaign against AFC Bridgnorth on Saturday.

But despite their impressive recent form, the manager says nobody at the club is getting carried away.

"Things are going well, we are enjoying the season and there is a good buzz about the place," King said. "But we are well aware we have only played 13 games in a 38 game league season.

"Crowds are on the up, we are playing some good football – long may it continue. But we're in November so we won't be getting carried away just yet."

Elsewhere in the division, leaders Wolverhampton Sporting Community secured a 2-0 win over Dudley Town with Tom Hill netting both goals.

Black Country Rangers thrashed division whipping boys Wellington Amateurs 8-0, while Smethwick fell to a 2-1 loss at Pegasus Juniors.

Gornal Athletic secured a 4-1 win at Bustleholme and Wyrley and Team Dudley played out a 3-3 draw.

King of the road after rally success

DUDLEY rally driver Clive King tasted success in the Historic Rally Car Club Championship. King, aged 59, and his Sutton Coldfield co-driver Anton Bird won their class in the national event.

They were quickest on every stage of the final round on forestry roads in Northumbria to clinch the 1300cc class in their Mini Sport-backed Cooper S.

King and Bird were runners-up in the championship involving more than 2,500 miles of travel during the season.

A retirement on the penultimate round on the Isle of Man denied them an overall victory when the Mini's back axle broke.

Opportunities at home and abroad

THERE were racing opportunities for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club both near and far at the weekend. Close to home a group travelled to Wolverhampton for the Coven Canter 10k, a race hosted by Wolverhampton & Bilston AC.

Tim Rowe placed 58th of 101 in 52.12, Lisa Perkins finished in 1.05.32 and Andrew Perkins stopped the clock in 1.09.38.

Another group travelled to Bridgnorth for a tough 10k starting in High Town before dropping down towards the river and inevitably climbing to a High Town finish. Gary Bonner came 13th in 41.55, John Andrews was 73rd in 50.26, Cilla Harding 185th in 1.01.02 and Jan Burbie was one second and one place behind.

In the Frankfurt Marathon, Dave Norman finished in 3.14.40, 1,783rd place, and Mark Homer 1,870th in 3.15.53, both dipping their toes in the international marathon water despite nursing themselves through the final few weeks of training trying to fend off injuries.

Yeltz knocked out of Trophy at first hurdle

Grantham 1 Halesowen 0

HALESOWEN went out at the first hurdle in the FA Trophy in Lincolnshire.

Grantham started the livelier from the first whistle and Daniel Platt was called on to save from Michael Hollingsworth in the third minute.

Danny Bragoli had Halesowen's first shot at goal on eight minutes but it went wide and two minutes later Grantham's Lee Shaw found himself through on goal but was denied by Asa Charlton.

John McAtee sent a free kick in on 21 minutes after Yasin Al Massry was brought down but the shot was weak and easily saved by the Gingerbreads' goalkeeper.

Grantham took the lead on 51 minutes when Curtis Burrows saw a shot blocked but Jordan Hempenstall followed up to score.

Yeltz sub John Hill put a half volley over the bar and McAtee went close.

★★★

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